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Jesus of Nazareth, the  
Christ of God











*Specimen vol.*  
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE CHRIST OF GOD.

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# EIGHT DISCOURSES

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

AT

*Galilee*  
THE LECTURE

FOUNDED BY THE REV. JOHN HULSE, M.A.

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BY THE

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REV. HENRY HOWARTH, B.D.

LATE FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,

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M.DCCC.XXXVII.



TO

THE REV. GEORGE ARCHDALL, D.D.

MASTER OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE,

*AND LATE VICE-CHANCELLOR,*

THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE,

AND

THE VERY REV. JAMES WOOD, D.D.

MASTER OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,

THESE DISCOURSES

PREACHED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED.



## P R E F A C E.

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THE design of these Lectures is to treat of an important branch of the Evidence of Prophecy; that which proves our Lord to be the true Messiah, “of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write.” The same argument affords a very convincing proof of the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, inasmuch as it brings into view such an extraordinary connection, and coherence of parts, between the Old Testament and the New, as, considering the circumstances under which those writings were produced, can be accounted for no otherwise, than by supposing the same divine Spirit to be the Author of the whole.

The limits of a work like this made it necessary of course to select a portion out

of the great body of the prophetic Scriptures. In doing this, it has been endeavoured to observe a rule, which has always been held to be of fundamental importance in the discussion of this evidence; namely, to begin with those predictions which seem the clearest, and about the meaning of which the best and ablest interpreters are generally agreed. It is hoped that the force of those, which are here considered, may have been placed in a sufficiently striking point of view to serve the great cause of revealed Truth, by inducing some who have hitherto paid but little attention to this branch of its Evidences, to seek for ampler and better information on the subject.

The Author has now to renew his acknowledgements to the Trustees of this Lectureship, whose kind approval of his exertions induced them to continue him in the office a second year.



# Substance of certain Clauses in the Will of The Rev. J. HULSE, M.A.

(Dated July 21, 1777.)

He founds a Lectureship in the University of Cambridge.

The Lecturer to be a "Clergyman in the University of Cambridge, of the degree of Master of Arts, and under the age of forty years." He is to be *elected annually*, "on Christmas-Day, or within seven days after, by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, and by the Master of Trinity College, and the Master of St John's College, or any two of them." In case the Master of Trinity or the Master of St John's be the Vice-Chancellor, the Greek Professor is to be the third Trustee.

The duty of the said Lecturer is, by the Will, "to preach *twenty* Sermons in the whole year," at "St Mary Great Church in Cambridge;" but the number having been found inconvenient, application was made to the Court of Chancery for leave to reduce it, and *eight* Sermons only are now required. These are to be printed at the Preacher's expense, within twelve months after the delivery of the last Sermon.

The subject of the Lectures is to be “the Evidence for Revealed Religion; the Truth and Excellence of Christianity; Prophecies and Miracles; direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, especially the collateral arguments; the more difficult texts, or obscure parts of the Holy Scriptures;” or any one or more of these topics, at the discretion of the Preacher.

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## HULSEAN LECTURES.

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### LECTURE I.

#### REVELATION XIX. 10.

*For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.*

THE circumstances under which these words were spoken, will direct us towards a just apprehension of their meaning, and open the way for that discussion, which is here proposed, of this great branch of Christian evidence. The heavenly messenger with whom the beloved disciple of our Lord was holding converse "in the Spirit," had just confirmed to him the truth of his wondrous revelations, by declaring that they were "the true sayings of God." Whether upon receiving this assurance St John was impressed with the awful thought, that he was

communing with no less than the Divinity itself, or whether he ignorantly deemed, that the representative of the Sovereign Majesty was the fitting object of religious adoration, he fell at his feet with intent to worship him. But with sudden severity the angel checks his rash purpose, and disclaims the proffered homage; "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." And then it is added, "for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." That Spirit of prophecy, therefore, to which the angel refers, is the same which he was engaged in imparting to St John; even that by which the latter was enabled to foretell the future fortunes of the church of God in Christ. But the same Spirit had been manifested for the like purpose long before the days of the Evangelist, for "the prophecy came of old time" by a long succession of "holy men of God, which spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Of *all* these, therefore, the angel must be understood as affirming, that they had "the testimony of Jesus;" that this was the sole end and purpose, for which they received the prophetic

gift that was in them; that “not unto themselves, but unto us of the latter days, they did minister the things” of that hidden salvation, “which is now reported unto us by them that have preached the Gospel unto us, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven\*.”

From hence we may discover the important and *exclusive* function, which is reserved for the Spirit of prophecy in the great scheme of Christian evidence. We may discern its use and value as compared with other branches of that evidence, that of miracles more especially. It is the grand link which connects and reconciles two distinct and apparently conflicting revelations of God. In order to see this point more clearly, let the testimony of prophecy be placed for a moment out of sight, and let us examine how the case would stand, as between the former and the latter dispensation. They are two professed communications from God, sustained by undoubted and almost equally convincing testimony of miracles. Each of them is promulgated in the light of a covenant, between the God of heaven and His creatures here on earth; the

\* 1 Peter i. 12.



one, moreover, claiming to supersede the other, as the more recent and authoritative discovery of the divine will. What a mystery is here! What a source of confusion and perplexity even to the best disposed among men! Where are they to make choice? The weight of evidence is great and unanswerable on either side. The Prophet who assumes the right of repealing the former covenant, brings the full credentials of “a teacher sent from God;” whereas he who was the Mediator of that covenant, as well as other “men of God,” through whose hands it was transmitted for ages, had used expressions which, in their obvious sense, forbade the expectation, that it was ever to be annulled. It was declared to be an *everlasting* covenant, emanating from Him, “in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning\*.” Its commandments were to be unto the people of God as “ordinances *for ever* in their generations†.” Yet on the other hand, it was a partial covenant, made with only one nation, and they, “the fewest of all people;” while the latter “called the world, from the rising of the sun unto the going down

\* James i. 17.

† Numb. xv. 15.



thereof," to a full and equal participation of its blessings.

It may be said indeed, that a sound judgment would feel no difficulty in deciding in such a case; for that the whole decision would turn upon one point, the reality of the miracles set forth by the later Prophet. These would give validity to his testimony of himself, let that be what it might. For it cannot be presumed, without shaking to its foundations our trust in the divine perfections, that God would authenticate by miracles *a lying* testimony, and be a party to the deceiving of His creatures. But notwithstanding this, the case we have supposed, would present many and serious difficulties. An ancient revelation of acknowledged authority would not so easily be dislodged from its hold upon the hearts and consciences of those, who had embraced it from conviction; while the conflicting claims of two wholly unconnected and contradictory revelations would have furnished to men of ungodly minds an obvious pretext for despising both.

To obviate these difficulties belongs exclusively to the testimony of the Spirit of prophecy.

It is this which establishes the *relation* subsisting among the several manifestations of divine grace; exhibiting them to view, as component parts of the same stupendous whole. By means of this, the former covenant is made a witness *for* the Gospel and *against* itself. Through this the Law becomes “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” If the Prophet of the new covenant announces Himself as a greater than Moses, He is enabled to appeal to Moses himself for the truth of His pretensions. “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me\*.” If again, He proclaimed that He was come “to *fulfil* Moses’ law, He could challenge the law itself to testify that it was an imperfect dispensation, requiring something further for its completion. These are advantages of evidence on the side of the Gospel, which no miracles could have supplied. These were sufficient indeed, to establish the *divine authority* of the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to confirm whatever power He chose to assume over that which had preceded. But they could not have directed us to any *relation*, or *connection*

\* John v. 46.

subsisting between them; neither could they have provided against the distractions and perplexities, arising out of ignorance of that relation. Hence it is easy to see, how important a testimony of Jesus the Spirit of prophecy is. It is a light that shineth in a place which would be dark indeed without it. To them, “who from among the Gentiles are turned unto God,” it gives assurance that they have not mistaken the Rock of their trust; that He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last\*,” of the revelations of God to man. But most signally, no doubt, will its value and its power be manifested, in the day when “upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” shall be poured the spirit of grace and of supplications; when at length, “they shall look upon Him, whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn†.” For Reason and Experience unite in attesting, that the chief, if not the sole, instrument of this mighty conversion will be the

\* Rev. xxii. 13.

† Zech. xii. 10.

testimony of the Spirit of prophecy. In the strength of that testimony the Apostles of the Lord went forth to the combat with their unbelieving brethren; and in almost every known example of a converted wanderer of Israel, by that testimony has the triumph been achieved. And there can be little doubt, that when "the vail shall be finally and universally taken from their heart, the light which guides their repentant steps to Sion and their lawful King, will be that which is borne in the hand of Prophecy."

In regard to the peculiar *force* of prophetic evidence, the Spirit of prophecy must be considered under two different aspects; either as having received, or as being in the course of fulfilment. A prophecy fulfilled has the evidence of a miracle, and proves the special interposition of God. Foreknowledge, according to our apprehension, is not the inherent property of any created Being. There is but One of whom we can believe, that in His sight one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; to whose eye that duration, which to human conceptions is in the nature of a *success-*

*sion*, stands fully revealed, from its beginning to its end, as one fixed and ever-present whole. To Him alone then belongs the power of summoning events from the womb of Time, and “amid the sundry and manifold changes of the world,” of shewing before how each shall come to pass. By this prerogative accordingly, in His revelation of Himself, He claims to stand *alone*. “I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure\*.” So far, therefore, as prophecy partakes in its accomplishment of the evidence of a miraculous work, the Spirit of prophecy may be ranked, with miracles in general, among the primary testimonies of the Christian revelation.

But in its *development*, the testimony of prophecy assumes a character exclusively its own. It is susceptible of being made a *continuous* evidence, which miracles are not. To cause the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and to

\* Isaiah XLvi. 9, 10.



summon back the dead to life, are acts indeed of an Almighty power, but in their performance, brief and transitory. The evidence of the work itself is confined to the few, who are permitted to behold it. Thenceforward it becomes the evidence of *testimony* only, and in that form alone can be perpetuated. But the word of prophecy, while yet in course of fulfilment, is of the nature of a standing miracle. It is a testimony which comes in contact with every age, and each successive generation of mankind. It is a *sensible* demonstration, that the Providence of God is *actually at work* in bringing to pass the counsels of His revealed will. In this point of view the word of prophecy presents us with a most striking and singular species of evidence; and its position in the revealed dispensations of divine grace corresponds very accurately with this view. For, in point of extent, it appears to reach from the beginning to the end of time. It is the chain, upon which we can behold suspended the secular annals of mankind; its first link being fastened to the gates of that Paradise from whence in guilt and sorrow man was driven;

while the last connects it with that future Eden of God, of which a far prospect was even then vouchsafed. Midway between these extreme points stands the Advent of the great Deliverer, rays innumerable of prophetic light converging from remote antiquity towards Him, as their central point; and from Him again diverging towards those periods of duration to come, unknown how near or distant, which lie about the confines where Time expires, and Eternity rolls on its endless course. Thus this "testimony of Jesus" has ministered to the faith of every former age, as it probably will continue to minister to that of every age to come. As the world advances, the course of events will reflect an increasing light upon those prophecies, which refer to the consummation of the Gospel times. The ingathering of the nations to the fold of Christ will become daily more and more apparent. The way will be made smoother for removing the veil, which is upon the hearts of the captives of Zion. The powers of Antichrist will be more plainly seen declining towards their destruction; and perhaps "the man of Sin" stand fully revealed,

to the abhorrence of all, ere 'he sinks to rise no more.'

Here let us pause for a moment, to meditate upon the exceeding mercy of our heavenly Father, who has added to us this testimony of His truth; thus leaving us in doubt, whether that mercy is more apparent in the great scheme of Redemption itself, or in the care which He has evinced to approve it worthy of our utmost acceptation. As if His design were to render it all but impossible for us to make shipwreck of our faith in Him, He has accumulated testimony upon testimony, adapting it to the wants and condition of men in every age, and in variety, which leaves no avenue untried, by which conviction can enter the understanding or affect the heart. In the Spirit of prophecy more especially, He asks of us no more than to confide in the testimony of our own unprejudiced observation; to look around us at the course of daily events, and to mark their tendency towards those issues, which are predicted in His unerring word. I know that there is difficulty and mischief too arising out of an injudicious application of this evidence;



that experience has often proved, how dangerous a thing it is, to launch into the sea of prophecy unfulfilled; and how lamentably men “professing themselves to be wise, have become fools,” by striving to explore its unfathomable depths. But it is not the less true on that account, that it may be both safely and profitably studied. For although the *final* issues are beyond human ken, we *may* judge of its past and present development, and gather from thence the most real accession of strength to our faith, and the most effectual warning or encouragement in the conduct of our lives. They were a blinded race, who in the days of Noah, immersed in the pursuits of gain or luxury, “knew not, until the flood came and took them all away\*.” No less so were they who, at the close of the Jewish age, discerned not the signs of those times, although, as our Saviour intimates, they were as plain to all who would understand, as “the face of the sky and of the earth†.” And equally blind are they, and equally the enemies of their own everlasting peace, who regarded with contempt, or overlook

\* Matth. xxiv. 39.

† Luke xii. 56.

with indifference, the signs of these *our* times. For it is past a doubt that living we are in the days of prophecy unfulfilled, and that there is enough in the broad and general aspect of events, to mark with sufficient strength and clearness the progress of the prophetic age. And while they who rightly discern it, will derive from thence a most convincing confirmation of every other "testimony of Jesus," it must serve to aggravate and deepen the guilt of those, who "seeing, see not." When in the day of decision the eyes of unbelief are opened, when that *contemporary* evidence, from which the unbeliever turned away his face, is set before him in the clearness which it now exhibits, he will surely be the first to feel, that he ought to have understood, and that the sentence of his damnation is just.

Such would appear to be the *peculiar* force and use of the testimony of prophecy in general. It is time that we turn now to that portion of it which will engage our more immediate attention. The revelations of prophecy will be found, upon examination, to bear a *twofold* testimony to Jesus; one portion of them being devoted

to a minute and copious description of the Person and Office of the Messiah; while another foreshews the great and striking changes, which were to ensue upon His coming into the world. In the former, we possess a body of evidence for identifying the Person of the Redeemer, than which, it is impossible for us to conceive that any could be more complete. Every principle of strength and every element of conviction, which can be imagined, as appertaining to such evidence, is combined in this with a solidity of power, which it is marvellous that human prejudices can surmount. The number, the variety, the *contrariety* of prophetic characters, which met together and were reconciled in Jesus, render it all but impossible for a sincere and candid enquirer to be mistaken in his conclusion. But these are points, which demand and deserve a more detailed consideration.

1. In all pretences of prophecy a most important character of truth is the *interval* which elapses between the prediction and its professed accomplishment; more especially where the event is *not far removed* from the ordinary

probabilities of things. Human experience, we know, taking direction from the past, may often under like circumstances, judge wisely of the future. Thus we may sometimes have known events predicted with a precision calculated to excite the utmost admiration of that sagacity which could so truly foresee them. But such foresight has its bounds. It can never adventure to embrace a very lengthened period of time; neither can it apply itself with any prospect of success, save only to such things as are rendered probable from the course of past experience. But if, after a long lapse of years, or even centuries, that which was predicted, appears to receive a signal and manifest fulfilment, then is this so far an evidence of its truth, as it excludes the suspicion of human foresight. Where human foresight ends, divine prescience begins, and we pass immediately from the one to the other. Moses announced that a Prophet should be raised up from the seed of Abraham, who might be known from many points of striking resemblance to himself. The changes and chances of fifteen hundred years intervene, before his

words are brought to pass. If at the end of such a period, the Prophet appears, and his resemblance to Moses is such, as cannot without great violence to truth and candour be denied, then is Moses a man of God, in whom dwelt the true Spirit of prophecy. It is almost superfluous to remind you how this criterion of truth distinguishes the testimony of Jesus. Not years only, but *ages* roll between Him and the latest of those revelations, which shewed before of His coming. Unbelievers have laboured with all their might to overthrow this bulwark of His truth; for the undeniable strength and clearness of some of those revelations is such, as to encourage them to gather their fairest hope of success from this very circumstance. But they have laboured in vain. For no proximity in point of time can ever be proved between any prophecy concerning Jesus and its fulfilment, until the authentic and undoubted annals of intervening ages shall be swept into oblivion.

2. A second important particular in judging of the truth of a prophecy fulfilled, arises from the *plain* and *circumstantial terms*, in



which it was delivered. No mark of the prophetic spirit is more conclusive and satisfactory than this. The same event may come to pass at different periods under a great variety of circumstances; and although mere human foresight might be able to predict its recurrence, yet *how and with what particular circumstances* it would recur, human foresight could not adventure to define. This element of conviction also enters into the testimony of Jesus with overwhelming and resistless power. The number, the variety, the minuteness of predicted circumstances, which were fulfilled both *in* and *by* Him, regarded as mere co-incidences, are utterly incredible. It may be objected indeed, that there were some things, which it was equally within the power of false Christs to have accomplished. If, for example, it was foretold to the daughter of Sion, that her King should come unto her, "lowly and sitting upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass;" it was at the pleasure of any pretender to attempt the fulfilment of this prediction, with the like circumstances in which our Lord Himself fulfilled it. If, that He should converse

much in a particular country, that His instructions should be delivered in a singular and unaccustomed method, that He should be a man possessing certain peculiar qualities of mind and temper, distinguished for a mild, a patient, an humble, a forgiving and most upright spirit, it is not impossible that these, and similar marks of the Messiah might be plausibly assumed to some extent. But the testimony of Jesus, we know, is very far from being grounded wholly upon marks of this description. They might even be omitted altogether in the account of prophetic evidence; and there would still be such a remainder, as no human foresight could have known, and no human ingenuity have met. I pass by examples in this place, because they will present themselves in the course of future discussion. All that I desire to impress upon you at present is, that when they *are* considered, you would remember, how irrefragable a basis they help to form of that conviction which is the result of prophecy fulfilled.

3. To the like purpose we may add an observation upon the *improbability* of many of

the events foretold. Something of this nature we have already alleged, in speaking of the extent of human foresight. We observed that this, as being solely the offspring of observation of the past, must needs on that very account be limited to things likely to arise out of the ordinary current of events. But if that which is foretold be *contrary* to all appearing probability, at the time, when it was spoken; if it must be brought about by a conjuncture of circumstances apparently the most accidental and unexpected, then nothing can work in us a more powerful conviction, that the prophecy was not of man, but of God.

4. The last observation which I shall feel it necessary to make upon this portion of the subject, relates to the *manner* in which this testimony of Jesus was developed; at distant periods, under a great variety of circumstances, and by a numerous company of prophets, for the most part unconnected, and independent of each other. The picture, in itself the most extraordinary that ever was attempted to be delineated, was wrought out by *a succession* of hands. To the first vague and indistinct out-



line, sketched before the age of David, each contributor threw in some feature of his own; sometimes indeed, retouching and reviving those which had been left in it by his predecessors, but not unfrequently adding others which seemed absolutely to confound the whole. Exclude the Gospel light, and even to its latest features it is impossible to judge in what way the prophetic type will be accomplished. Had the prophecy come of old by the will of man, had each pretended prophet been desirous of adding a feature, which should agree with *his own* conceptions of the picture already drawn by those who preceded him, they must, in many instances, have spoken *differently* from what they did. There are so many points of seeming incongruity, so much that is utterly irreconcilable by any efforts of human wit, as, unless it had been fulfilled, in the way in which it was fulfilled, would have been reasonably held to be impossible. But complete the picture, as it stands in the records of prophecy, take it from first to last, with all its conflicting and contradictory features, and apply it to the life and person of Jesus, and it immediately arranges itself into

an harmonious and consistent, although unlooked for and extraordinary whole. Thus the very *number* of that "goodly fellowship of Prophets," the *variety* of their conditions, and the *singularity* of their several predictions, present the clearest manifestation of "that one and the same Spirit, dividing unto every man, severally as He would." They could not otherwise, while the pencil of one oft seemed to mar what another had drawn, have produced together such a work, as in the minuteness of its features, at once harmonious and discordant, transcends by infinite degrees the utmost conceivable limit of success, which can be allowed to human genius or invention.

Before we conclude these remarks upon the general force and character of the testimony of Prophecy, we must not omit to notice that peculiarity of its construction, which divines have termed *the double sense*. This is the more necessary, because although, when properly considered, it is a crowning evidence of the divine original of the prophetic oracles, it has nevertheless been distorted by the adversaries of Revelation into an argument of their falsehood and

futility. It seems abundantly clear, that several of those prophecies, which are applied to the Messiah, bore another reference to some nearer events, and in them received a just accomplishment. If this be allowed, they are still *true* prophecies, although of a subordinate character; and supposing them to be lost in the account of the direct and personal “testimony of Jesus,” they must still contribute to that *general evidence*, which the Spirit of prophecy bears to the truth of the Christian dispensation. But this, although the just conclusion, differs widely from that which its enemies would insinuate as true. Their aim is to represent the prophets of God, as no better than the diviners among the heathen; to insinuate, that like ignorant pretenders to foreknowledge, they sought to frame their predictions in terms of such convenient ambiguity, as might insure for them *some* plausible fulfilment, albeit from different, or even contrary events. But assume the truth to be, *that two distinct fulfilments were contemplated*, and no more; the one subordinate, and the other, the principal; the one of a temporal, the other of a spiritual character; and the former emblematical

of the latter. Here must be ambiguity indeed; but is it the ambiguity of ignorance and imposture? Is this a case to be paralleled with the vague and unmeaning effusions of sooth-sayers and diviners? Or is it not rather an example of infinite Power and infinite Wisdom combined? Of Power which could so shape the analogy of the events, that the *same* prediction might be verified in *both*; and of Wisdom which so dictated the *terms* of a prophecy, as to express with equal propriety its twofold accomplishment? Far therefore from being disturbed by the cavils of the adversary at the double sense of Scripture prophecies, great reason have we to bless and adore that goodness, which furnished us with this *additional* "pillar and ground of the truth." Such double sense is as a double security for the fact of their divine original. The first fulfilment is a pledge and earnest of that which is to succeed. And when both are past, they combine into one irrefragable witness of God, annihilating all insidious pretences of coincidence or chance, and leaving room for one only possible conclusion, that "this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

To establish the conviction that Jesus is the Christ, is the contemplated end of these our labours. But why do I adventure to bring forward such an argument within the precincts of this holy temple? Is it because any of you who hear me, cherish doubts upon this vital truth? Is it that you require to be informed upon the details of that evidence, by which it is established? God forbid that I should come before you with thoughts so vain as these; that I should be so forgetful of that atmosphere of light and truth, in which it is your privilege to breathe and live; that I should be so deficient in the first and most essential of all knowledge, that which makes man "little in his own sight." But if I should presume to ask you, how the conviction that Jesus is the Christ has wrought within your heart; if I should enquire, whether it has lain there like a dormant seed, dead indeed, but never quickened; if I should ask the aged, whether it has been able to keep them, through all the perils and vicissitudes of a lengthened life, in that "way of righteousness," which alone can exalt "the hoary head" into "a crown of glory;" if I should ask



the young, whether it has moved them with steady constancy to “flee youthful lusts,” and to “cleanse their way” by ruling themselves after the word of Christ’s commandments; if I should require it of the wise and gifted, whether the same conviction has taught them to count all their well-earned fame “but loss,” for the excellency of that knowledge, which excelleth all, “the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord;” upon this ground the humblest of Christ’s ministers can scarce exceed the just limits of his station and his duty. In these things youth may be the monitor of age, and simpleness of wisdom; and age and wisdom will not despise the admonition, because the voice which utters it, is raised from far beneath the platform of their eminence.

Let such self-enquiries, therefore, be looked to as the most valuable result of these our meditations. Let every argument which adds its portion to the great sum of testimony that Jesus is the Christ, be held as an inducement of the most prevailing order to Christian holiness and watchfulness and zeal. We all remember a discourse, the very first that was delivered

in defence of this momentous truth, and how the preacher with inspired energy summing up his holy doctrine, broke off with this conclusion; "therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ\*." But what had he told his hearers in this, that they, "pricked in their heart," should gather around him, and the rest of his fellow-ministers, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Was it that they had shared the guilt of that cruel and tyrannous act; that their hands had actually been imbrued in the shedding of that "innocent blood?" Oh! no, not more than ours. There were many, no doubt, in that assembly, who, in the matter of fact, were as guiltless, as we are. But in the *spiritual* crime, the "crucifying Him afresh," they had cause to tremble, and so have we. For to such, to prove that Jesus is the Christ, is to raise a note of awful warning. It told them, and let it tell us, that He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the Judge of all men, to pardon or condemn, to save

\* Acts ii. 36.



or to destroy. Who saith to His redeemed, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" but unto His enemies He saith, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

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## LECTURE II.

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JOHN V. 39.

*Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they, which testify of me.*

THESE are the words of “a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs.” They are therefore words of truth ; because to a false testimony God cannot set the seal of His approval. We are hence assured beforehand, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament contain matters sufficient to explain and justify the appeal which is thus made to them ; in other words, they contain predictions sufficiently numerous and plain, of the character and office of our Lord, to render it imperative upon all, who bow to their authority, to own Him for the Christ, the Son of God. So far then, we are in possession of a clue to the labyrinth of ancient prophecy *generally* ; but when we come to prosecute our enquiries *in detail*, many difficulties spring up in our path.

We find ourselves introduced into a field of vast extent, and in parts, of great obscurity; and we have need of a guide, lest we should miss our way in threading its ample mazes. Some prophecies indeed there are, which apply to our Lord with great clearness and precision; others in which He is *probably* discerned, but not with incontrovertible evidence. Many more seem to relate to Him, only as they relate to that divine economy of which He is the Head; while some which are referred to Him, appear primarily at least to look to other events, and in many instances have already received a complete and signal fulfilment.

To meet these various difficulties and uncertainties, we have, happily, many helps beyond such general intimations, as that contained in the text. Our Saviour Himself has cited some of the prophecies of old, as having received their fulfilment in Him. His Apostles likewise made this their grand argument in preaching the Gospel to their obdurate brethren; and from hence accordingly we have a selection of prophetic oracles, which upon *their* authority, are applied to Jesus of Nazareth.

By the aid of these examples, we are guided in our interpretation of many others, which include a reference to Him; and in general, we may acquire such an insight into the genius and structure of prophetic language, as will enable us to recognise with tolerable confidence those peculiar forms of expression, which denote the Messiah to be the subject of discourse. Nor, finally, must we refuse its just value and importance to the light, which is thrown upon this portion of "the oracles of God," by the wisdom and learning of those to whose guardianship they were especially committed. For although the Masters of Israel are not to be regarded by us in the light of infallible interpreters, yet it is but reasonable to ascribe to them that insight of which we have spoken, into the hidden meaning of the prophetic Scriptures, in a degree which gives to the received interpretations of their church the utmost weight of uninspired authority.

All these therefore, are so many lights and assistances to direct us in our examination of "the testimony of Jesus." And it would greatly diminish the chances of an unsatisfactory result,

if we would only be contented with *enough* for conviction; if, when we have found sufficient to give us ample assurance, that Jesus is the Christ, we would not suffer our faith to fail, because some prophecies go unexplained, and most probably, in the present stage of our spiritual discernment, are not susceptible of explanation.

In alluding to those prophecies, which are applied to our Lord, upon His own authority, and that of His Apostles, we have assumed that some at least are cited *expressly* as His testimony, and that such is their true and legitimate application. It will be as well, in this place, to justify this assumption against the adversaries of His name; for they have not scrupled to affirm that such application is both erroneous, and irrelevant to the purpose. One of that infidel band, whose awful warfare against the Son of God was among the horrors which darkened the close of the last century, has bestowed considerable pains upon this argument. And his tract was composed with sufficient ability to confer upon it a certain degree of permanence. His principal assertion is, that "the prophecies cited from the Old Testament by the authors

of the New, do plainly relate, in their obvious and primary sense, to other matters than those which they are produced to prove." And from thence he concludes, that they are "to be applied only in a secondary, or typical, or mystical, or allegorical, or enigmatical sense;" that is, as he would have it understood, in a sense, which robs them of all force to be "the testimony of Jesus." The obvious consequence of such an argument, if successful, would be, to shake the evidence of Prophecy to its foundations. For if those prophecies are to be rejected, which Jesus Himself and His Apostles advanced in vindication of their appeal to the Scriptures, what authority can any other advocate of Christianity pretend, in adducing evidence from the same source?

Now it is admitted, by this objector, that such prophecies were designed to be alleged in the character of *proofs*; that is, as revelations concerning Jesus and His times, and in Him receiving their legitimate fulfilment. And who, let us ask, could be more competent judges of this, than the men who thus adduced and applied them? Who knew the mind of the Spirit better than He unto whom that Spirit was



given “not by measure”? Where shall we find surer interpreters of the word of Prophecy, than they who had the gift of Prophecy themselves? Call the sense in which they applied these sacred oracles secondary or typical, or what you will, it must be the true and legitimate sense; the sense which alone could constitute them that proof which they were designed and declared to be. Before the objector demurred to their application of the testimony of Prophecy, he ought to have invalidated the evidence of their inspiration. He should have shewn them to be merely human and fallible interpreters, who might advance conjectures in the place of proofs. Until this is done, it is no prejudice to their interpretation, that these prophecies seem to bear another sense, or to indicate a different event. We have shewn, on the contrary, that this very fact, when rightly viewed, is a crowning evidence of their divine original.\* Under such circumstances, the only point of which we are left to judge, is the correspondence between the prophecy and the event to which it is applied. With any other event to which it may have applied, we have

\* See Lect. I. p. 22.



nothing whatever to do. When we have ascertained that the Spirit contemplated a particular event, in which the prediction received a just accomplishment, we have then ascertained the testimony of prophecy clear of every doubt or objection.

The very first particular to which the order of these discourses requires us to allude, is an instance in point; I mean that eminent prophecy of the birth of the Emmanuel, which was given to the house of David, in the person of Ahaz. That prophecy is cited by St Matthew, as having received its accomplishment in the miracle of our Lord's nativity. The correspondence between the prediction and the event to which it is thus referred, is evidently laid upon the *miraculous* mode in which Jesus was conceived and born of a pure virgin: by which it is implied, that this was to be a distinguishing mark of the Messiah, and that, as such, it is revealed by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah in this place. If we look to a literal fulfilment, that is, a fulfilment agreeable to the direct and obvious meaning of the terms employed, I ask, if it be possible to imagine any sense in which such

fulfilment could be more complete. In this case, it would certainly appear, that the first or nearer accomplishment ought to be regarded as the subordinate and typical; for in respect of this, the text in question occupies a position in the general prophecy altogether disproportioned to the mysterious sublimity of its expressions. A brief review of the prophecy and its *primary* interpretation, will set this in the clearest light.

The allied monarchs of Syria and Israel had taken evil counsel against Ahaz and against Jerusalem, saying, "Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it\*." To calm the fears of Judah in this season of peril, the Lord sends this message of encouragement unto Ahaz: "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands." For thus saith the Lord God; their counsel "shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." But the besetting sin of Ahaz and his people at this time, was "the evil heart of unbelief." Their fears overcame

\* Isaiah vii. 6.

their faith. And therefore God, whose mercy, happily for his ungrateful creatures, is more unwearied than all their provocations, vouchsafed to offer them a confirmation of His promise, by the pledge of "a sign from the Lord." And this is the sign, which the Lord Himself proposed, when Ahaz had refused to ask; that within such brief period of time as a virgin might become a wife, and conceive, and bear a son, and her infant attain unto the age, when reason's first faint dawn begins to distinguish between the good and the evil,—within such brief period the power of both these kings should be broken, and their thrones levelled with the dust. Such is the primary interpretation of a prediction which opens thus: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." But how poor a purpose appears to be served by these magnificent expressions. They amount to nothing more than a circuitous mode of representing the *brevity* of the period, within which the *main* incident of the prediction shall be fulfilled. As an announcement of events to happen, they constitute only an *inferior* part of the prediction, the grand and

important feature of which is, that the powerful enemies of Judah shall be rendered incapable of prosecuting their evil designs against her. And the awful name, "God with us," is introduced, not as *literally* belonging to one that is born of woman; but only as intimating the divine interposition on this occasion, after the same manner in which Abraham calls the place of Isaac's sacrifice by a name signifying, "God shall see, or provide."

These very expressions, then, bearing so subordinate a sense in the first and immediate intention of this prophecy, are adduced by an *inspired* teacher, as applicable to events of the most astonishing kind, by which they are verified in their sublimest sense, and that the most literal and unforced. This may be called applying the prophetic oracles by way of accommodation only; but if, by accommodation, it is designed to intimate such a loose and indefinite mode of application, as renders them of no force in "the testimony of Jesus," the term surely cannot obtain in this instance. For if the grand evidence of a prophecy fulfilled, lies in the exact accordance of the event with the terms of the

prediction, and that in matters which are singularly removed from the ordinary course of things, then is this a prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth in the strictest and most perfect sense. It bears upon the face of it the announcement of such wonders as none but the God of heaven could fulfil; and it corresponds with actual facts, which upon other and certain evidence we know that the God of heaven did fulfil. We may conclude therefore, that this text is an unquestionable prediction of the Nativity of the Messiah, and a most important link in that chain of prophetic evidence which confirms the pretensions of Jesus to that character.

In the same light, as it seems to me, that is, as essential parts of the "prophetic testimony of Jesus," are to be received two other predictions, which are cited by St Matthew; the one declaring the place of His birth; and the other, the countries which should be chiefly blessed by His ministry. Of both these, it is to be observed, that they received their accomplishment by methods the most natural and unsuspected. Who could have foreseen that the parents of our Lord, dwelling in a remote town



upon the outskirts of the land, should have been found in Bethlehem at the precise moment when the fulness of the prophetic time was come? What could have brought them thither, but that particular decree whose behests could be obeyed by them in no other place? And what wisdom so ordered the events of the Roman empire, as to give scope and opportunity just then for executing a decree, which had been issued years before, but interrupted, and postponed to a period of universal peace. What wisdom, but His, who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, after the counsels of His own will, and who saith of every earthly potentate, in the person of one of the most distinguished, "he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure\*."

Again, His almost uninterrupted sojourning in the parts about Galilee, "the land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphtali," presents, at all events, a very remarkable circumstance in the life and ministry of our Saviour. There He was conceived, and, according to every probability, there should have been the land of His Nativity. But how then must the Scriptures be fulfilled? Yet

\* Isaiah XLIV. 28.

the same Spirit, which brought Him to the city of David to be *born*, pointed to Galilee as the land of His *habitation*. And there He spent the years of His private life, “until the day of His shewing unto Israel.” There He opened His gracious and glorious ministry with “the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” In their synagogues He first stood up to teach and preach the Gospel of the kingdom; and while all eyes were fastened on Him, and all hearts subdued by “the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth,” to them that believed the prophets, He stood revealed, through the “Spirit of the Lord that was upon Him; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might;” and they knew that this was He which should “preach good tidings to the meek, and bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort all that mourn;” and the ears of captives drank in the blessed sounds of deliverance, and “the opening of the prison to them that were bound,” and found by glad experience, when the Son of Mary made them free, that then “they were free indeed.” The land of darkness, which was thus illumined by the light of His



wisdom, is the same which was most blessed by the miracles of his mercy. It was "about all Galilee" that he went "healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people;" and from thence that His fame extended far and wide to the utmost borders of the mighty Syrian land. There likewise He chose His humble followers, the pillars of His future kingdom; and the first glorious flood of Evangelical light descended upon the heads of "fishermen of Galilee." The awful scenes of His Passion and Resurrection alone interrupted, for a season, the completion of this word of Prophecy. The grand acts of Atonement and Justification demanded a wider theatre for their display. But even before he entered "the valley of the shadow of death," His spirit looked back to the land of His earthly pilgrimage; and he forewarned His "little flock," that, scattered as they soon must be, He would yet again "go before them into Galilee\*." And in Galilee He closed His heavenly mission, as he began it, in a scene of august sublimity, which waits to be surpassed only by that in which "He shall appear the

\* Matth. xxvi. 32.

second time, without sin unto salvation." I consider this singular and conspicuous fact in the life and ministry of Jesus; I reflect, how little of choice there was in it, for by far the greater portion of His days; how in childhood, the home of His parents made it His; how even in maturer years, the natural affection of a son would detain Him, until the time when He "must be about His Father's business." I consider also, how, after His glorious mission was begun, the force of circumstances kept him there; how often the obscurity of Galilee was His *compelled* retreat from persecution and premature destruction. And I cannot doubt, that in this thing also, the Spirit of Prophecy bore testimony of Him; that He was that "great light," which, in a distant age, was to shine upon "the people that sat in darkness," even "the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations\*."

Let us now turn to another of the prophetic characters of the Messiah, and let us give it our earnest and deliberate attention. For there is none in regard to which the Spirit of

\* Isaiah ix. 1, 2.

Prophecy is more conclusively "the testimony of Jesus." Long ages had rolled away, since "the arm of the Lord was revealed" by any in "the form of man." Those mighty and terrible judgments, by the force of which the former covenant was established and upheld, survived only in the records of a remote antiquity. They remained indeed in all the unfading vividness which only an inspired pen could impart; and the crowded page exhibited, with vigorous reality, the rapid and almost unbroken manifestations of the Almighty arm. And after them came the rarer instances of later times, with wider and wider intervals between, until although man was still the depository of divine wisdom, he could no longer wield the thunders of Omnipotence. But although children, and children's children for numerous generations, knew of miracles only by history and the tradition of their fathers, yet the revelation of Prophecy announced that "the arm of the Lord" was not yet finally withdrawn. It spoke plainly of a day in which the Omnipotent would again go forth in the greatness of His strength, to build up for His people a better and a surer covenant, upon the

foundation of the same grand testimony. Every son and daughter of Sion, whether of high or low degree, watched and waited for this coming of their Lord. The Messiah was He in whom the God of Abraham was to descend again upon the earth, and by miracles of love and mercy to His chosen, to transcend immeasurably all former demonstrations of His might. Let us endeavour to share the feelings, and place ourselves in the situation of a witness of those times. Let our heart be glowing with that flame of universal expectation, which burned more intensely from day to day. Let the thrilling impression of the approach of the Mighty awaken every sense and agitate every nerve, as when one hears the hum of advancing multitudes, and each moment may reveal the glorious spectacle. Let this be our state of mind and feeling, as it was that of thousands in the days of which we speak. And on a sudden the trump of fame shall convey to our ears "the Voice" that is in the wilderness. The Prophet is come; the "Wonderful" hath appeared; and we shall make haste into the wilderness "for to see." And we shall find one of a diviner spirit indeed, and

exceeding blamelessness of life; and we shall hear from his lips a godlike doctrine of a coming kingdom, in which none must love or live in sin; and we shall see him administer a rite most simple and beautiful, the emblem of spiritual cleansing and purity. Is this then the Christ? Have we at length “found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write?” We are lost in wonder and in doubt. For clothed, as he is, in the attributes of a man of God, we see not our sign of signs. “John did no miracle\*.” The Spirit of a divine understanding is with him; but “the arm of the Lord” is not revealed. We are in doubt therefore; but in doubt which shall soon be dispelled by his own self-denying testimony. “I am not the Christ;” “one mightier than I cometh;” “He it is who coming after me is preferred before me.” Turn away your thoughts from me, and go seek Him; for He is “the Lord whom ye seek,” “the Messenger of the Covenant,” “the Saviour and the Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.” Thus directed, we depart in search of Him, of whom we are now assured that He is come;

\* John x. 41.



and presently the swell of another and a louder cry announces that Emmanuel is near. Admiring crowds shall throng the way, as we pursue the deepening sound; and one shall say, "I beheld Him, walking upon the waves, and the waves were as the solid rock beneath His feet;" and another shall say, "I sat down with Him in the lone and sterile wilderness; five thousand were we of men, besides women and children; and I saw him bless the scanty meal, and the food of one was the portion of many, and all—all did eat and were filled." And she who communed with Him at the well shall lift up her voice and say, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did;" come, see if this be not the Christ.

Thus while every heart is filled with wonder, and every tongue employed in bearing testimony to some deed of might, the oft-repeated exclamation shall greet our ears at every step, "When Christ cometh will He do more miracles than those which this man hath done\*?" Amid such recountings of His mighty acts we are arrived at length before Him; and it shall

\* John vii. 31.

be at a favourable moment for conviction. The deaf and the dumb, the halt and blind, are gathered before and around him; and the two disciples of the imprisoned Baptist are standing by. They have just announced their errand; “Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another\*?” And as yet He has made them no reply. But His looks of profound compassion are fixed upon the sad spectacle of the ravages of sin, and He seems to meditate within Himself fresh deeds of beneficence and might. Lo; now He turns to that maimed and crippled form, which kind hands have laid at His feet, and in accents of exceeding majesty and tenderness combined, He saith, “I say unto thee, Arise and walk.” Near to him stands one, who in life hath carried about “the dull cold ear of death,” and the tongue which never found articulate utterance for the thoughts of his teeming breast. Him next the Prophet “taketh aside from the multitude†,” that every eye may see. His acts are simple as His might is vast; a touch, a sigh, and—“Ephphatha, be opened.” But another is there, a bystander indeed, but

\* Matth. xi. 3.

† Mark vii. 33.



no spectator of this amazing scene ; for alas ! in the evil portion of a fallen race, his heritage was the curse of darkness. Again, the great Physician vindicates the source of His transcendent power by the disproportioned meanness of His acts. He stoops to take of the dust of the ground : He tempers it with the moisture of His lips : He anoints with it the eyes of the blind, and saith, “Go, wash,” and “receive thy sight.” It is finished : and where are the tongue and pen that may do justice to the altered scene ? Even where alone they can be, in the oracles of God, the testimony of “the Spirit of Prophecy.” For thus it is written, “Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing\*.” But He motions to peace ; and for a moment the voice even of struggling gratitude must be hushed. He prepares to speak ; the enquiring disciples are awaiting His reply ; and oh ! that *we* might feel it in our heart of hearts ;—“Go, and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see.”

\* Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

“Jesus is the Christ,” if prophetic signs fulfilled, and prophetic deeds of power and wonder can prove Him such; and we might further shew, did the limits of our appointed task permit, if prophetic qualities of mind and heart can add conviction. We should have deemed it no mean accession to this portion of the prophetic evidence, to compare the *mental* and *moral* perfections of our Lord with those of the Messiah. And we should have argued, that if the Spirit of Prophecy drew, and the Spirit of Jesus realized a character, which subsists without a parallel, then we had confirmed by the amplest testimony the grand fact of their identity. The more prominent lines of the transcendent portrait would suggest themselves at once. “The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,” was it not manifested in that day, when the wisdom of hoar hairs was shamed by “the understanding and answers” of a child? And if of Messiah it was foretold that “righteousness should be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins,” we need not fear to claim the noble testimony for

Him, "who knew no sin." We remember also His indifference, yea, His earnest aversion to the breath of popular applause; and have thought of Him seeking shelter in obscurity from the fame, which gathered around Him, wherever He was known. And in this also we recognise that servant of God, that "elect one, in whom His soul delighteth," who "shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street\*." Again, if Messiah is one that "judgeth not after the sight of His eyes, neither reproveth after the hearing of His ears," so also is He, who silenced the voice of unpitying accusation with, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And when He gave His sentence, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more;" let us own that this is He who would not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax."

But all this we must rather commend to your own careful study, and call forth your own diligent observation upon it. We must exhort you, whether ye "search the Scriptures" of Prophecy, or muse upon the records of the life of

\* Isaiah xlii. 1, 2.

Jesus, to bear in memory this identity of mind and character, in the great subject of the one and the other. And we are persuaded that not only in those broad and conspicuous lines, at which we have thus rapidly glanced, but in a thousand minor shades of thought and temper and affection, the resemblance will strike with a mighty conviction. You will feel the force of analogies, whose very *minuteness* is the best argument of their truth, and you will rise up with tenfold assurance, that this is "He that should come," and that besides Him other Messiah there is none. We conclude therefore with a brief application of the theme, which has last engaged our thoughts. If we have alluded to a character composed of all perfections, unimpaired by aught that can be called defect,—if we have turned your thoughts to One in whom was centered "whatsoever is just, pure, lovely, and of good report," each virtue in itself of unlimited perfection, and in their conjunction, of inconceivable lustre,—we are able to assure you, that this example was for us, that *we* might "follow His steps." Yea, we can place the portrait of unsinning purity in fearless contrast with

that of guilt unspeakable, and proclaim that the elements of likeness are not annihilated, that the one is a fitting copy for the other. We durst not have said this, except the Word of unerring truth had said it for us. But we know that the Word of truth would not mock our misery by vainly animating us to deeds impossible. When it saith that the Christ is our example, it darts a ray of hope into the deepest recesses of pollution, and admonishes "the chief of sinners" that he may yet, if he will, attain unto "the same mind which was in Christ Jesus." We say then, first, that the imitation of Christ is possible in the nature of things; that His perfections were the attributes of a human soul, and may one day be the glory of yours. We say further, that this is not only possible in thought, but practicable in point of fact. We rest not this upon the superiority, vast as we admit it to be, of the rules and motives of Evangelical holiness. We rest it not even upon the more spirit-stirring agency of a living pattern of all perfection. These are mighty instruments; yet alone they would strive in vain to awake such palsied energies as ours. But we



rest a work of inconceivable greatness upon an Agent of inconceivable might. We tell you that your bodies are the temple of that Spirit, "which spake by the prophets," and dwelt in Jesus; and ye need not our assurance, that in His Almighty strength ye may accomplish "greater things than these." Will you yet recur to the thought how vain the pursuit, how hopeless the attainment? We admit the difficulty in all its strength. And we return you for answer of *fact*, that Eternity is the space allotted you for the work; and for answer of *argument*, that your objection infers nothing more, than that the work is fitted for Eternity.

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## LECTURE III.

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1 CORINTHIANS I. 22, 23.

*For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified.*

THE great doctrine which the Apostle thus propounds in terms of such emphatic brevity, he evidently considers to be a sufficient reply to the demands of both the classes of objectors alluded to. To the one he saith, You require a sign—an evidence of “the power of God.” I propose one, which, if you would view it rightly, ought to satisfy your utmost scruples. The sign which I set before you is that of a crucified Saviour, of which your blindness has made a stumbling-block. You feel it impossible to admit such contrarieties of character in the Redeemer to whom ye look. You cannot combine the splendours of an everlasting dominion with the miseries of a depressed and suffering condition. You are unable to discern how the majesty of

a Prince can consist with the meanness of a peasant and the doom of a malefactor. But if this was foretold and has been exactly verified, what surer sign, let me ask, can you require? What more conspicuous evidence of divine power can you imagine, than such an union of inconsistent and improbable conditions in one and the same Messiah? Again, therefore, I repeat, if a sign from Heaven could convince, you have one which leaves you nothing to desire. There can be no plainer manifestation of "the power of God," than the sign of "Christ crucified." To the same effect we interpret the Apostle's reply to the cavils of the sceptical and self-sufficient Greek. To him he saith, "You seek after wisdom:" I submit to your contemplation a scheme of wisdom the most profound. But you cannot receive it, because it accords not with the rules of your so-called philosophy. You spurn remission of sins through the blood of a crucified man. You reject with contempt the idea of a Saviour, who could not save Himself. But wise in your own eyes, the foundations of your wisdom are laid deep in ignorance and error. You would adjust the counsels of the

Allwise to the standard of human systems. You would attempt to fathom the Infinite Mind with the line and plummet of a pigmy Intellect. But "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God;" and that is reason sufficient why the wisdom of God appears as foolishness unto you. But to them who are the called, who view things not in the dimness of a depraved intellect, but by the light of a divine intelligence, to such, I say, the highest wisdom, "the wisdom of God," is "Christ crucified."

Upon the foundation of these two momentous conclusions we build the order of our present discourse, endeavouring to set before you in "Christ crucified," the power of God and also the wisdom of God. The former, we doubt not, will be fully evinced in the sign of a suffering Messiah; and the latter, in the development of that stupendous work, for which a suffering Messiah was ordained. We therefore bespeak your patience while we raise yet further the veil from "the Spirit of prophecy," and again bring the light of Gospel truth to bear upon the dimness of its mysterious oracles. And if, in the far bosom of the prophetic past, we can shew you

Calvary, like another Sinai, towering amid the wide waste of a spiritual wilderness, and if we can trace the faint outline of the hallowed symbol of Salvation, and the form that languishes to death upon it, we shall then trust to have shewn you “a sign from the Lord,” a manifestation of “the power of God,” even the sign of the crucified Jesus, “an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off\*.”

We shall not need to insist much upon the general fact of the death of the Messiah, for that is a point to which the voice of many prophets bore an express and concurrent testimony.

Thus the spirit of David was overruled, when he spake of his great affliction, that his “strength was dried up like a potsherd, his tongue clave to his gums, and he was brought into the dust of death;” and the figurative became the literal suffering of Him, who filled up the woes of the prophetic David. Thus Isaiah, emphatically the prophet of Messiah, foresaw Him, “cut off out of the land of the living†;” and a voice from the land of captives echoed back the mournful truth, “Messiah shall be cut

\* Isaiah LV. 13.

† Isaiah Liii. 8.

off\*.” By these testimonies we know that a *dying* Redeemer could alone be the Redeemer of prophecy. It was not merely “the arm of the Lord revealed,” not “the Spirit of wisdom and counsel and might,” but it was the hand of *death* that must set the seal to His testimony, and give us assurance that this is He.

But then wherein must His death be distinguished from that of any of the sons of men? By which of its thousand gates was He to enter the valley of the shadow, that by *this* token especially He might be known? Some there be upon whom the relentless destroyer lays his hand with gentleness and long forbearance—who breathe their last in peace amid the soothing cares of loving and lamenting friends. Others suddenly, in an instant, are snatched away in the spring-time of health and strength, like the prophet, before their “eye was dim, or their natural force abated.” Or if, peradventure the death of the great Prophet could be conjectured from that of others in the same ministry, we might expect to see Him perish, without sentence or trial, by the hands of lawless and infuriated enemies.

\* Daniel ix. 26.



For thus had been shed the blood of many of God's prophets since the foundation of the world, "from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of him who was slain between the temple and the altar."

Nevertheless, of Christ the Spirit speaketh expressly, that He should die by the sentence of a Judge; that in the *manner* of His "cutting off" there should be the semblance at least of judicial sanction and solemnity. This truth is embodied in the *single* expression used by Daniel; it is set forth by Isaiah in unambiguous terms, "He was taken from prison and from judgment." The very scene of trial is depicted in the complainings of David, again overruled by the Spirit of prophecy: the false witnesses are there; they "rise up; and lay to His charge things that he knew not." He is condemned therefore, and condemned, as it might naturally be concluded, by a tribunal of His country; and His punishment will be among those which the laws of His people assign for such as have "sinned unto death." But in what terms do we find that punishment described? Is He to perish by that awful



judgment ordained of God among His people, "Thou shalt stone him with stones that He die?" Or is the blazing pile to consume Him in its fury, or the cord of strangling to cut short the breath of His existence, or, finally, is it left to the avenging sword to drink the blood of His forfeit life? He dies not thus. Yet from the armoury of Justice every weapon is now withdrawn; and we pause in doubt to await the revelation of His strange and unaccustomed doom. Hear the marvellous description: "They pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones." Compare these expressions with the awful spectacle of the sufferings of the cross. Think whether, in the wide range of human punishments, another can be found to meet their purport. Reflect how many ages had risen and departed before this one found its way into any human code. Run over in your minds the series of strange and inscrutable providences, which brought the holy Jesus under the sentence of that code, and so ordained that He should die by its sentence, while at the same time it pronounced His acquittal. And then say, if this be not the Spirit

of prophecy—if the hand of the Lord be not visible in this; and confess at length, that they who sought a sign of “the power of God” might have found it in “Christ crucified.”

But we have not shewn you *all* “the testimony of Jesus” in the wonders and the mysteries of His Passion. The Spirit of Prophecy is of a “quick and piercing” sight, and scans the minute, as well as the striking and the grand. If it drew with a vigorous hand the mighty terrors of the Cross itself, it could also stoop to delineate the most trivial incidents, which should attend the Messiah on His way. It could tell how “He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and how He hid not His face from shame and spitting\*.” It could paint Him, “the despised and rejected of men,” the scoff of His enemies, the betrayed of His friends; it knew of the gall, which they should give Him for meat, and of the vinegar which, when He thirsted, they would offer Him for drink; it knew of the debate which should arise upon His garments, and saw them parted,

\* Isaiah L. 6.

all but one; yea, it could recite the very words and gestures of mockery of those who should be there to look and stare upon Him.

But for the more forcible elucidation of this portion of the argument, the exceeding minuteness with which prophetic tokens were accomplished in the sufferings and death of the Messiah, we desire your attention to one or two examples in detail. Take, first, the price of the innocent blood. The treason is consummated and the guerdon paid. Who could have foreseen its use? What imagination could have conjured up the potter's field in the days of Zechariah, or have dictated the awful train of events, through which it came to be purchased with "the price of blood?" I take leave to cite the prediction in full, because of the astonishing exactness with which it was accomplished: "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord\*." It is not simply to

\* Zech. xi. 12, 13.

the broad and general features of this prophetic transaction, remarkable as they are, that I would more particularly direct attention; the number of the pieces of money, and the metal of which they were composed, the returning of the price and the use to which it was applied; but it is to the singularity of the *manner* in which it was returned, and the surprising fact, that even this was included in the fulfilment. The money was *cast* to the potter, and the very expression was verified. The instigators of the traitorous act will not take back the price out of the hands of the conscience-stricken tool of their malice. They repel with abhorrence him and his polluted treasure: "What is that to us? see thou to that." Stung at once by their contempt and the bitter anguish of remorse, he *flings* the pieces of silver upon the ground. But where? The prophet saith, "I cast them to the potter *in the house of the Lord.*" The historian saith, "He cast down the pieces of silver *in the Temple.*" These are particulars of a minuteness which could scarcely have been anticipated to appear in the fulfilment of the prediction. Had the price been

proffered and received without any thing observable in the manner in which this was done; had the incident occurred in the palace of the High Priest, or before the judgment-seat of Pilate; we can scarcely feel that the general force of the prediction would have been thereby in the least impaired. At the same time we are assured that they are not related by the Evangelist with any view of adding weight to its fulfilment; for he cites the prediction in a way which rests the accomplishment entirely upon its more *general* features. We count it impossible then for any one to read St Matthew's relation, and not feel profoundly convinced that Judas did exactly as he is reported to have done; and no less impossible do we count it, to compare the events with the prophecy, without being struck with the extraordinary *minuteness* of its fulfilment.

We will next call your attention to the circumstances attending Christ's removal from the cross. And we will ask of you, first, to reflect, what power forbade the completion of the work of death, when the bones of His fellow-sufferers were broken. Who foresaw that,



when the ministers of vengeance came to Him, He would be “dead already;” and that this—accident must we call it?—should cause Him to be made a striking exception to the almost universal fate of those in His condition? Was it chance? Or was it because the Scripture had said, “A bone of Him shall not be broken\*?” Again, who could have anticipated the honours of His entombing, so strangely contrasted with the ignominy of his fate? The power by which He was condemned had ordained it, as a portion of the shame of the cross, that the naked and disfigured corse should be cast forth to public view, a spectacle of loathing to every passer-by, and a prey to every creature whose instinct impelled it to feed upon corruption. We may be told, that although He died the death of a slave, yet it was not for the crimes of a slave; that many of the great and wealthy of His own nation deplored His untimely fate; yea, that the breast of His heathen judge was filled with compassion for Him, because he had found “no fault in Him.” Of these sentiments and dispositions, the circumstance of His honourable in-

\* John xix. 36.



terment was the natural, and almost necessary result. It was but for those to ask, what the feelings of the other would most powerfully incline him to concede. But is not this the word of prophecy? That though His grave was with the wicked, yet He should be with *the rich* in His death;—and why? “because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.” Here is a prediction, whose fulfilment was made to depend upon the feelings of two distinct and most differently situated parties. And who is sufficient for these things? Who, but He, of whom we are taught, that the hearts of all “are in His rule and governance, and that He doth dispose and turn them as it seemeth best to his godly wisdom?” Again, therefore, we desire you to consider the things which ye have heard, and to say, if the hand of the Lord be not in them, and whether they, who seek a *sign* of the Providence and the “power of God,” could ask a greater than “Christ crucified.”

Hitherto we have been engaged in illustrating the Apostle’s assertion of “Christ crucified,” as “the power of God,” in answer to those unbelievers who required “a sign.” And we

would gladly trust, that the considerations which might be effectual in their conversion will not have been without their use in strengthening the faith of us who believe. It remains for us to advert, in the next place, to his second assertion of "Christ crucified" as "the wisdom of God;" in reply to those whose infidelity was occasioned by their "seeking after wisdom." For notwithstanding that this doctrine seemed as "foolishness" unto them, because it accorded not with their rule of wisdom, yet the Apostle declares it to be wisdom of the highest order, even "the wisdom of God." Upon this, we must beg leave to ground a brief preliminary argument, before we proceed to the illustration of his position; by reminding you, that it is no objection to the wisdom of any scheme which emanates from God, that such wisdom is not appreciated by men of the most powerful and highly-cultivated understanding. Those minds which are impressed with true notions of the attributes and perfections of a Deity, will be the first to acknowledge, that no "foolishness" can exceed that which would estimate His counsels by the rules and measures of "the

wisdom of this world." We scarcely need the voice of Revelation to assure us, that His thoughts must be higher than our thoughts, even when ours are at the highest; and that the distance between the counsels of an Infinite Mind, and the conceptions of such intellects as our own, can hardly be affected by the minute varieties of capacity and power which subsist among the latter. Such notions are of a piece with that ignorant philosophy, which would infer this entire earth to be a level, because so much of it as the eye can grasp at any one view appears to be so; and which would therefore reject as "foolishness" the report of an observer, throned beyond the planetary sphere, and enabled, by the advantages of such a position, to judge and represent the truth. For, trite as this illustration may seem, wherein does it differ from the case of those who scorn "Christ crucified" through seeking after wisdom? Or why should they be blind to "the wisdom of God," but because they will persist in applying to it an insufficient standard of their own. The Apostle was justified, therefore, in rebuking the foolish "heart of unbelief" by the simple asser-

tion of "Christ the wisdom of God." He did right to affirm that "Christ crucified" is the wisdom, because He is the *ordinance* of God. And those, who repudiate the ordinance of God, because it is not the scheme which they would have fashioned for themselves, what do they but evince that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men \*?"

We advance to the illustration of the Apostle's assertion, as far as we are able. But here also we must put in our plea for the feebleness of human capacities, and the imperfection of human knowledge. For who can truly apprehend Christ, as "the wisdom of God," but they who are able to view Redemption as it is? We must be content with partial and defective glimpses, from the puny eminence on which we stand; yet even thus we are not without hopes of discovering and representing to you some indications of the glorious truth. And for this purpose we commence by observing, that the expression of "Christ, the wisdom of God," includes a reference *to some end*. We apprehend

\* 1 Cor. i. 25.

the elements of this wisdom to be, the designing of fit and effectual means for the attainment of some great and excellent end in view. Now all the great ends which God designed in "Christ crucified," may, we conceive, be summed up in this one thing, the extirpation of sin from God's universe. "For this purpose, as saith St John, the Son of God was *manifested*, that He might destroy the works of the Devil\*." It is only, therefore, by a strict reference to this great purpose, that we shall be able to form a just estimate of Christ as "the wisdom of God." We must call to mind what are those "works of the Devil," for destroying which a crucified Messiah was ordained; and we would sum them up in these two particulars; the curse of sin *upon us*, and the dominion of sin *within us*. Thus the point for illustration will be the aptitude and efficacy of "Christ crucified" for removing this curse, and extirpating this dominion.

For the first we have no other argument to offer you, than the assurance, which we have received from God, that Christ *hath re-*

\* 1 John iii. 8.



*deemed* us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us\*.” We can pretend to no further information upon these awful topics, than what the revelations of divine truth have afforded. In this therefore the wisdom of Christ crucified must repose wholly upon the fact of its being *the ordinance* of an Allwise Being. He discerned the perilous exigency of our condition, which we could not perceive ourselves, and He provided for it by a method, which, if we will confide in His assurance, “is able to save us to the uttermost.” If now we can be made sensible of any truth in the world, it must surely be our hopeless inability to contest the point with sin. The great bulk of mankind we see following its bidding, as passively and impotently as a victim led bound for sacrifice. The most successful are the first to cry out, O wretched that we are, “who shall deliver us from the body of this death?” Sin reigns in our hearts, poisoning each affection at its very source. Sin reigns in our carnal members, prostituting them continually, as instruments of unrighteousness, to its own base purposes. Sin reigns

\* Galat. iii. 13.



in our understandings, polluting the fountain of thought, warping the faculty of judgment, disabling us from drawing just conclusions, in cases where the most vital interests are at stake; instead of reasoners, converting us into sophists, to invent pleas and apologies for itself, in defiance of the dictates of unbiassed reason, and the remonstrances and restraints of conscience. Let us imagine then for a moment, that it had pleased the great "God and Father of us all" to interfere for our deliverance, by a method whose success should depend wholly, or in large measure, upon our own unaided powers of resistance; that he had proposed to us, for example, a perfect law of holiness, but left us to follow it or not, as we were able; that He had pointed out to us the path of victory, but sent us forth against the giant, cased only in the armour of Saul. The contemplation of such a method as this will put you in possession of our first argument for "the wisdom of God" in Christ; namely, that it rests our deliverance from the curse and tyranny of sin, upon so simple and practicable an instrument as faith. That it calls upon us to trust wholly in the assurances of

God, that He is our salvation and our strength; for that “what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh\*.” And if we desired to furnish you with a practical evidence of the surpassing “wisdom” of this appointment, we would ask of you to enter with us the chamber of death, and withdraw the curtain by the side of the expiring sinner. You should be made to see the terrors and tremblings of the failing heart revealing itself in unremitting and agonized petitions for mercy. And we beseech you to remember that it is not our purpose here to paint the horrors of the dying impenitent, but those natural fears of which we doubt whether the most upright spirit can wholly divest itself in sight of Eternity. And you should be instructed to try what effect would be produced in soothing those alarms, by a barren reference to the better and holier moments of the past, and its least sinful and condemning recollections. And however favourable a picture this might present, you would soon be con-

\* Rom. viii. 3.

vinced of its utter vanity for consolation, until you brought it into immediate contact and connection with "Christ crucified." But appeal to the principle of faith, speak of the fulness of Redemption through His blood, and then, of the best deeds of a well-spent life, as the fruits of the grace of His Holy Spirit, and you shall see the tempest abate, and the troubled waves of fear subside, and there shall be "a great calm." If, then, "Christ crucified" can thus soothe the terrors and reassure the confidence of the departing spirit; and further, if it *alone* is of power to effect this when all other means, which might be expected to avail, are tried in vain, we take this to be a most evident proof that here is the very remedy which our state requires, and that "Christ crucified" is "the wisdom of God."

Another mode of illustrating the position in question is, by considering the *moral* force of this doctrine upon the heart and understanding. For we thus discover, that as far as our *own* sentiments and affections can assist in the great warfare of sin, the knowledge of "Christ crucified" engages all their energies on the side of

God, and in resistance to Satan. When I contemplate a crucified Messiah in the light of a victim, slain because of sin, I cannot but be impressed with a strong and startling conviction, how the nature of God must abhor sin. And knowing, as I do, how Omnipotent He is to judge and punish me for sin, my fears engage me to flee sin, with every impulse of my soul. And this, supposing that I possess only a very defective knowledge of the greatness and preciousness of the ransom in His sight. But if I go on to contemplate this ransom in its full dimensions, if I permit myself to dwell upon the amazing thought, "God was *in* this Christ," then my fear rises into a sentiment, which I can find no language to express, and I tremble almost to "the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," at the thought of what must be the *personal* penalty of sin to each individual impenitent.

But if "Christ crucified" thus *repels* from sin, through fear, with no less strength does it *attract* towards God through love. It is an affecting contemplation—when we make it *indeed* a subject of contemplation—to view Christ as the gift of God to a guilty and perishing world; to

consider Him, whose kingdom ruleth over all, upon whom wait myriads of pure and lofty Intelligences, dispersed through regions of illimitable space, that He may open wide His hand, and dispense to them all their several needs and blessings out of His plenteousness;—to consider Him, I say, caring and labouring for the preservation of one obscure, but hapless race, as if He were indeed the shepherd forsaking all the residue of his flock, to go after that one which was lost. But this is not the contemplation, which exhibits, in its utmost strength, the efficacy of Christ crucified to *win* us from the love of sin. It is not the view of divine compassion weakened, if I may so speak, by diffusion over a whole race; but it is the sense of that compassion bestowed and concentrated upon the *individual self*; it is the thought of that great Being lavishing His tenderness upon *me*, as if *my* salvation were His only care; it is the image of the friend, who, in the wreck, relinquishes his hope of safety to me, while he sinks to rise no more; or, in the hot and murderous fight, detects the fatal aim, and interposes his breast to be the shield of mine. It is thus that I am



made to feel, how great a love it is “that a man lay down his life for his friends;” that I am attracted by the power of an irresistible affection to the side of Him to whom I owe so much, and swayed to love what He loves, and hate what He hates. It were easy to multiply this kind of illustration to almost any extent; but we have offered enough to bear us out in our conclusion. We repeat, therefore, that if it be any proof of wisdom, to design for us such a method of deliverance from sin, as should engage the most powerful sentiments and affections of our nature to its success, then is the wisdom of “Christ crucified” eminently “the wisdom of God.”

Finally, as those who, in this place more especially, are engaged to seek after wisdom, we beseech you earnestly to suffer no pursuit of human wisdom to betray you into neglecting this. We would remind you, that, “whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” But there is one wisdom which endureth; it is the wisdom that is from above—the wisdom of “Christ crucified.”



## LECTURE IV.

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### ISAIAH LIII. 10.

*When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*

GUIDED by the light of prophetic truth, we have traced the Messiah through his sufferings to His cross, and from thence to His costly and honoured tomb, so strangely at variance with the circumstances of His fate. Comparing these predicted facts with the Passion, and Death, and Burial of our Lord, we have seen them accord with a minuteness, which upon principles of mere coincidence is quite inexplicable. We pointed out the course of the events, in appearance indeed casual, and rising out of each other in the most natural succession imaginable, yet conducting to results, which plainly manifested them to have been overruled by the power and providence of God. The awful spectacle which next presents itself for our contemplation, is Death dethroned,

and driven awhile from his dominion, by that stronger Potentate, who had power to take from him his armour wherein he trusts, and to make of him a captive and a spoil. The Spirit which foretold so much of what seemed minute and unimportant in the history of the Messiah, would hardly pass over in silence the astonishing theme of Death and the Grave subdued. It would have been a marvel, nay more, it might have been a stumblingblock to faith, had the same Spirit, which spake so largely of His sufferings, said nothing of "the glory that should follow;" by the obvious inconsistency of an omission so remarkable with its minuteness in lesser things. We are sure, however, that He who hath hitherto received so convincing a testimony of Prophecy, is not left without it for the remainder of His sublime and unparalleled career. His own appeals to Scripture upon this important portion of His history, were not made in ignorance. He could ask with confidence whether Christ *ought* not to have suffered the things which He had suffered, and then "to enter into His glory." Neither would His apostles have been found labouring so earnestly by the help of this

argument to corroborate the grand and vital truth;—"opening and alleging *out of the Scriptures* that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead\*." And indeed it is not difficult to cite abundance of texts, which assign to the Messiah a *being* subsequent to death, as well as many others which speak of Him in language unintelligible except upon the like supposition. Our text itself, an unquestionable prediction of Christ, might be advanced as conclusive on this head. And it is moreover remarkable for continuing onward the amazing narrative without break or interruption, as if it spake of the *same* existence, of which death was to prove, in Him, no more than a brief suspension. For no sooner has His soul made "an offering for sin," which is a fresh allusion to His death, already mentioned, than, without any apparent interval deserving of remark, He is presented to us again, a living witness of a progeny of His own, and continuing to be, for an indefinite and lengthened period, an active and prosperous instrument in furthering the pleasure of the Lord.

\* Acts xvii. 3.

Upon passages not more explicit than this, St Paul has grounded a prophetic testimony of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Thus he cites the second Psalm: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." And a text from Isaiah, which, separately considered, bears much more obscurely upon the amazing fact of a corporeal resurrection. It is where God renews the promise of an everlasting covenant with His people, in these words: "I will give you the *sure* mercies of David." He spake this, argues the apostle, with reference to His future purpose of raising up Jesus from the dead, "now no more to return to corruption\*." Now, although we might, upon St Paul's authority, advance these Scriptures as a sufficient proof of "the testimony of Jesus" upon this head, yet we are prepared to admit, that when viewed merely in their terms, the interpretation would seem forced and difficult. But then we ought to remember, that the clearness of any given prophecy is not to be judged solely by the terms in which it is conceived, but by a reference to the great *aggregate* of prophetic light which

\* Acts xiii. 34.

the same truth has at any time received. Allusions in themselves obscure become abundantly intelligible, when the subject to which they refer is grown familiar to the hearer's apprehension, through the medium of former and more distinct annunciations. So that it is a thing impossible, unless this observation be kept constantly in view, to arrive at any just conclusions as to the general clearness which pervades these ancient "oracles of God." To illustrate this in the example under review, the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead, there is extant at least one prophetic declaration, whose meaning can with difficulty be misconceived. And it is worthy to be observed, in reference to what we have just stated concerning the *general* clearness of prophetic light, that St Paul concludes the argument, which he had begun upon the seemingly obscure, with the convincing and satisfactory distinctness of this; thus concentrating them all in one flood of mutually assisting light upon the great truth which he designed to corroborate. The prophecy alluded to is that of David in Psalm xvi. in part indeed, but only in part, applicable



to himself: "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell; neither shalt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." The meaning of these expressions, as we have just observed, can scarcely be disputed. The allusion is obviously to the respective conditions of the soul and body after death: the one departing to the appointed place of its secret and undiscerned abode; the other returning to the dust, as it was, and, in the ordinary course of nature, to corruption. Of whomsoever, therefore, the prophet spake this, the *singularity* of His fate is unquestionable. And when we remember, that it was incompatible with the objects of the prophetic spirit, to foretell events with a clearness which could not be misconceived, we shall rather marvel at the precision, than question the certainty, of these predictions of the resurrection of Christ. We stay not to repeat St Peter's triumphant refutation of the futile conceit of the unbelievers of his day, that the royal prophet spake this of himself, and not of the Messiah. The notion was too absurd, advanced, as it was, in sight of the precincts of his tomb, where, if proof were wanting, it might easily be had, that his flesh



did see corruption. David spake therefore of Him of whom in after times Isaiah spake, in language then grown to be fully intelligible, that He should “see His seed,” that He should “prolong His days,” that He should “swallow up death in victory\* ;”—the same also, who is introduced by a contemporary of the Evangelical prophet with these triumphant expressions in His mouth: “O Death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction†.”

The next particular which demands observation, respects the *time* when the Messiah was to rise from the dead; and we desire to introduce our appeal to Scripture upon this point with a further illustration of the spirit and the genius of prophecy. The first rule of all for the interpretation of the prophetic oracles is, *the testimony of the Messiah*. To Him, and the covenant of God with man through Him, their revelations continually point. From the midst of temporary and earthly themes oftentimes the Spirit springs to Him, overpassing with instant bound the carnal and the perishable, to dwell upon the spiritual and the eternal.

\* Isai. xxv. 8.

† Hosea xiii. 14.

For detecting these difficult, but important transitions, the study of prophecy has suggested one most valuable direction. We all know how frequently the errand of God's messenger was an errand of wrath and judgment, and we can scarce have failed to remark how constantly the threatenings of woe were accompanied and lightened by the allurements of promised mercy. And further, when the season of tribulation is arrived, and the land of God's heritage is sore distressed, we must have observed, how it is then that the visions of prophecy glow with anticipations of future joy; and it may be, that we, like the two disciples, have felt our hearts burn within us, while we knew not Him who is present with us in the opening of these Scriptures. Yet it has been found to be certainly true, that in this method, and on such occasions, the Spirit of prophecy is continually revealing the fountain of all blessing and comfort. And although the consolation may appear, upon the surface, to be as temporary as the present calamity, yet we are sure that it was more, yea, and by the faithful among God's people, *apprehended* to be more than this. For alive, as they ever were,

to the one glorious hope, the least allusion to heavenly comfortings kindled it afresh in all its ardour, and they felt that the blessing and the promise was of Him, who was emphatically "the consolation of Israel." The passage we are about to cite is an example of this description, in which Vengeance does, as it were, lead in Mercy by the hand, that she may plead with the sinful for his dismissal, and engage them to repentance by awakening bright hopes of reconciliation and blessing: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." And then the greatness, and the certainty of the near deliverance, are combined in these most singular expressions: "After two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight\*." Let it be conceded, that this may be interpreted in a looser sense, agreeably to the primary intent of the prediction; that these expressions may be construed merely as a general intimation of the briefness of the period when wrath shall end and love return; yet,

\* Hosea vi. 1, 2.

when we reflect upon them further, we cannot choose but feel that this is not the *whole* of their interpretation. For consider, we repeat, the extreme preciseness of the terms, "*after two days,*" and, "*in the third day;*" bear in mind the general, the almost unfailing test, which would connect this Scripture with Him who was to come; compare it, finally, with that one fact in the annals of mankind, which so fully answers to its most literal sense; and we think it will hardly remain a subject of doubt, for what intent, and of whom the prophet spake this. Still less will it be so, if, mindful of our former course, we blend the light of this with all the rest which the same Holy Spirit had poured upon this one truth. For we shall then call to mind how often, under His direction, the third day had been marked as a day of glory and great blessing. We shall think of Isaac, received from death "*in a figure,*" on the third day of his separation for sacrifice\*; of the sign of Jonah, redeemed from the belly of his hell at the end of three days†; and this will prepare us for discovering, in the language of

\* Gen. xxii. 4.

† Jonah ii. 2.

Hosea's prophecy a literal fact respecting the date of Messiah's resurrection. We shall discern under the figure of temporal healing and deliverance the great masterpiece of Love divine, when He who was *literally* dead should be revived and raised up on the third day, thenceforth no more to see corruption, but to live for ever in the sight of God the Father.

But what then is to be the end of that earthly existence, which hath thus survived the stroke of death? And where the place of His final rest, who slept not in the chambers of the grave? Upon this mystery likewise many rays of prophecy have poured their various light; but we turn to one, which, like the distant suns of heaven, shines brightly with unborrowed lustre: "The LORD said unto my Lord;" or, to divest the expression of its needless obscurity, "Thus saith Jehovah to my Lord." Here then are three: first, the prophet, who reveals; and next, Jehovah; and last, the prophet's Lord. Who is this but He to whom "give all the prophets witness," even "He that liveth and was dead?" And what is it which I hear concerning Him? "Sit thou on my right hand



until I make thine enemies thy footstool." His rest indeed is glorious; the right hand of Omnipotence—the throne of universal dominion. He that "by wicked hands was crucified and slain," is become the "King of kings and Lord of lords." We can now trace the prophetic steps of His exaltation where before we discerned them not. For this, no doubt, is He who "is gone up with a shout;" even "the Lord with the sound of a trumpet\*." For Him the glorious strain, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." It is the hymn of His angel-ministers, an innumerable company, who precede Him to the realms of light. At the voice of His approach all the city of the new Jerusalem is moved, and ask, "Who is this King of glory?" Ten thousand tongues reply, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory†." And now the gates lift up their heads, and lift up are the everlasting doors, and the King of glory hath gone in. And the Ancient of days doth sit, whose garment is white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool.

\* Psalm xlvii. 5.

† Psalm xxiv. 7—10.



And the Son of man cometh near to the Ancient of days, and they bring Him near before Him. And there is given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed\*." Therefore also the Spirit testified, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of Him? and the Son of man, that Thou visitest Him? For thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour†."

Are these then the prophetic visions of Messiah's greatness? And are they not equalled, yea, exceeded in Jesus Christ? Make answer, ye chosen, who beheld when "He was taken up, and the cloud received Him out of your sight." Make answer, heavenly pair, who lingered awhile behind that white-robed host, to reveal the parting message of hope, and the promise of a more glorious return‡. Make answer, thou blessed martyr of His truth, who, from the depth of tribulation and mortal anguish, didst

\* Dan. vii. 9, 13, 14.

† Psalm viii. 4, 5.

‡ Acts i. 10.

see "the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Be ye our witnesses, that we may "see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels;" and believe that this is He, who, "for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour\*."

Thus terminates the prophetic picture of the life and death, the resurrection and ascension of Messiah. Thus in Jesus were reconciled the strange and contrary features, so inexplicably combined together in one. Here stands revealed "the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh;" the mystery of Grandeur and Humiliation, the mystery of Glory and Shame, the mystery of Poverty and everlasting Dominion. But we would add yet a word, before we finally take leave of this portion of "the testimony of Jesus;" we would remind you, that the light of prophecy testifieth of the *doctrines*, as well as the *deeds*, of the *light*, as well as the *life* of the Redeemer. And firm as we trust the argument already is, we cannot look upon it as an altogether worthless accession to its strength, if we

\* Hebr. ii. 9.

briefly shew the identity of the Gospel of Jesus with the prophetic Gospel of the Messiah.

It is known unto us, first, that through this man, even Jesus, “is preached unto us remission of sins;” and that it is He, “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption\*.” And so, we are sure, was the Messiah ordained “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness†.” And if the Messiah was to effect this, by bearing in our stead the iniquities of us all; if His soul was to be made an offering for sin; if He was to justify by the knowledge of His righteousness; if He was to make intercession for the transgressors;—no jot or tittle of these several acts of mediation is overlooked in the mediation of Jesus;—His death declared to be the ransom of sinners; His Resurrection, their justification; and His Ascension, the proffered pledge that “He ever liveth to make intercession for them\*.”

Again, Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he

\* 1 Cor. i. 30.

† Dan. ix. 24.

‡ Hebr. vii. 25.

were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." And we are sure, that in this also He propounded no new thing, but a doctrine inseparable from the faith of the Messiah. This was the hope of the afflicted patriarch, to know that His "Redeemer liveth, and should stand at the latter day upon the earth;" and to gather from thence a sure and certain persuasion that "in his flesh he should see God\*." It was the hope of David, when he thought of that bright morning in which the wicked shall receive according to their wicked deeds; and the upright, long oppressed by them in the mysterious providences of this world, shall at length have dominion over them. Exulting in the view his fervid faith overleaps the bounds of time, and seems to grasp the glad reality, as he exclaims, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." The Spirit of Prophecy in the ages subsequent to David has left ample testimonies of the knowledge of the same great truth. What, for example, can be plainer than those expressions of Isaiah in his triumphant

\* Job xix. 26.

song of Judah: "O Lord our God, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us; they are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise." But "thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead\*." What, again, can be more express than Ezekiel's vision, in which the resuscitation of the dry and fleshless bones was the adopted emblem of God's power and promise to revive the dying hopes of His captive people? Such images as these imply something more than a vague idea; they denote both an exact and familiar apprehension of the great truth upon which they are based. And thus we see that this doctrine of a corporeal resurrection was a conspicuous feature in the prophetic Gospel of the Messiah, yea, and in that more ancient Gospel, which animated the faith and hopes of the patriarchal church of God.

Of another leading truth of Revelation, intimately combined with this, we may perhaps have

\* Isaiah xxvi. 13, 14, 19.



discovered some trace in the Scriptures already cited—I mean the awful truth of a judgment to come, as *founded upon* the resurrection of the dead. And it is worthy of particular remark, that these two great doctrines appear, not merely as constituent elements of the true faith in every age, but as existing in that intimate *connection*, at which we have pointed, so that the one is ever consequent upon the other. It may be sufficient to observe this feature, as it is exhibited in the revelations of Jesus, and in those of the prophet Daniel. If, according to the first, “God hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained,” then this is the pledge and assurance of that His purpose, “that He hath raised Him from the dead\*.” In like manner, if to Daniel it was foreshewn that “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, it should be, for some, in order to everlasting life, and for others, a rising to shame and everlasting contempt†.” Thus let us compare, as minutely as we please, the religious systems of the Messiah and of Jesus,

\* Col. ii. 12.

† Daniel xii. 2.

and we shall find, even to the exactest point of agreement, that they are one and the same. One text more, however, we would not omit, as presenting an additional feature in the Evangelical scheme, and at the same time expressing its great elementary characters in the most distinct, yet comprehensive form. It is that of David; "Thou hast ascended on high: thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them\*." Apply these expressions to Jesus of Nazareth, and the concluding events of His ministry on earth; and where does each particular find a more just or suitable fulfilment? Let Sin be the captivity; and what image more fitting to describe its awful tyranny? Let Redemption be "to lead captivity captive;" and where in the annals of the human race can be found a conquest so great and glorious? What gifts were ever so worthy of the name as those which descended, according to His promise, upon the Apostles and early followers of Jesus? And what truer description could be given of their nature and de-

\* Psalm LXVIII. 18.

sign, than that the "Lord God might *dwell* among them?"

We hold it, therefore, to be a great confirmation of the truth and mission of our Lord, that He was no setter-forth of strange doctrines; that He unfolded a system, coinciding in every leading truth with all that had hitherto been received in the world as the undoubted revelation of God; that the grand elements of the religion which He taught were the same which the church of God had ever held fast, virtually embodied in the comprehensiveness of that Gospel, which was preached before unto Abraham, and subsequently developed with increasing light, as "the fulness of the time" drew on. Thus, to adopt the illustration of St Paul, we have received in the Gospel of Jesus the one true faith, with its unchanging and unchangeable elements; even one body, and one spirit, and one hope of the believer's calling; one Lord also, one faith, and one baptism; and all these emanating from the alone immutable Fountain of truth, the "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all\*."

\* Ephes. iv.

And for this reason it is matter of surprise that a text, whose true interpretation is wholly based upon the principle in question, should have been so far misapprehended, as to be thought to present an inconsistency between the successive revelations of the Spirit of God. When Jesus "brought life and immortality *to light*," He did no more, (as we have shewn,) than advance the true and primitive faith of God to a further, or perhaps we ought rather to say, its furthest point of perfection. And surely it cannot be held to be any disparagement of His Gospel, if it doth no more than this; neither is there the least necessity for depreciating the light of former revelations, in order to enhance the price and vindicate the honour of the last. We repeat, on the contrary, that no surer or more satisfactory evidence can be afforded of the truth of the religion of Jesus. When we observe the first grey dawn of morning, we are aware that the faint brightness on which we gaze is but the emanation of some source of distant light. And when, in the order of its gradual approach, we at length behold the glorious orb go forth from his chamber of the

East, we recognize the same, but only more brilliant splendour, with that which we beheld before. And in like manner it behoves us to consider the successive stages and degrees of spiritual light in the revelations of God. When we compare the broad and perfect day with the faint dawn of the patriarchal and prophetic ages, we ought to perceive that both are emanations from the same fount, now seen, but then unseen; that it is the same Sun that shone with dim, but rising lustre upon Abraham, and Moses, and the prophets; and at length hath mounted to its noon-day splendour in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. And the effect of our perception of this guiding truth will be to strengthen and confirm our faith in Him, as the alone "true spiritual light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Here, then, for the present, we conclude our enquiry into "the testimony of Jesus;" and all that remains is to leave with you our final word of exhortation, before we part. So much of the effort of reason and demonstration must generally enter into the religious discourses of this place, the appeal is so constant to the un-



derstanding, so comparatively rare and casual to the heart, that there cannot but be danger of our resting in the point to be proved, and if that is done, to count it all. We reflect not that the preacher stands in the place of one charged to "beseech us in Christ's stead," to try to prevail with us in matters of the last concern to be wise, and zealous, and active for ourselves. We forget that the most successful illustration of divine truth is a poor and idle effort, when it serves no higher purpose than to win conviction, or procure applause for the ingenuity of its author. But it is not for this that Christ's ministers come before you, as ambassadors for Him. Their hopes can never rest upon the perishable meed of applause for a triumphant argument. When they stand before the throne, and the spirit, and the aim, and the *fruit* of each ministerial effort are reviewed, one heart withdrawn from sin, and strengthened unto obedience, will be of more price to them in that dread hour than a thousand understandings submitting themselves to the sentiment of a barren conviction. Earnestly therefore would we entreat of you to suffer every endeavour of

ours to share in this best, this inestimable recompence. Whatever you may deem of the success with which the subject of these labours has been brought before you, that is according to our feebleness, and what we could. But the willing heart, the penitent thought, the godly resolution, are yours; and of these only we desire that a portion should be witness for us both, when we meet together in the judgment. But if, in every instance, this may not be; if some will hear, and some, alas! forbear, then must he who now addresses you be permitted to pray for this judgment in his own behalf—the wicked, whom thou warnedst, “must die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

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## LECTURE V.

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JOHN V. 46.

*Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me :  
for he wrote of me.*

WE have seen how the prophets whom God raised up in long succession, during the later ages of the Jewish church, bore a wonderful and consistent testimony to the Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth. They were instructed to foretell His birth and life, His deeds, and, above all, His sufferings, with an exactness which discovers, in the plainest manner, the fulness of divine foreknowledge. We are now to go back to an earlier æra, and a more distinguished witness; and to try our Lord's pretensions by the appeal which He made to him and his testimony. We might indeed sustain that appeal by shewing how the doctrine of a Redeemer to come pervades the writings of Moses; and how fully the life and ministry of Jesus corresponds

with every feature of His description, so far as it can be discerned in that comparative dimness of prophetic light. I propose, however, for the purposes of this lecture, to adopt a different course, and to confine the question of evidence to one particular prophecy, which, in its clearness, seems to tower like a beacon-light above the obscurity of the rest.

It is that in which Moses announces the advent of a Prophet *like unto himself*. This text, we know, was adduced as a “testimony of Jesus,” by the inspired apostles of Christianity; a proof, at least, that the application of it to the Messiah was no strange opinion in the Jewish church. It is competent, therefore, for any advocate of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” to follow their example, and to justify his appeal by establishing the striking and singular resemblance which the greatest prophet of the Old covenant bore to the Mediator of the New. The subject has been discussed by Christian writers both of recent and of ancient date; and more especially by one of the most acute and learned of our own divines, the parallel has been run out into a great variety of very minute

particulars. The coincidence in every point is doubtless extraordinary and difficult to be accounted for upon the principles of mere chance; yet it may be admitted, at the same time, that all of those coincidences are not equally available, nor equally needful for the purposes of evidence. There have been differing opinions respecting the application of this prophecy to other prophets besides our Lord; and in one instance more especially, by a Jewish commentator however, the analogy has been carried to no less than fourteen points, between Moses and the prophet Jeremiah. But it is obvious that the strength of our Lord's appeal lies, not in points of *general* likeness between himself and Moses, but in the circumstance, that both of them stand distinguished by characters which belong to no other prophet. We have to consider therefore, first, in what respects Moses stood *alone* among the prophets of old; and then to enquire, whether *in these respects* he was an exact and remarkable type of that future Prophet, of whom he spake.

One of the chief and most prominent features in the history of the Hebrew prophet is his pri-



vileged intercourse with God. In an age when the prophetic dignity was not sparingly dispensed, the ordinary methods of divine revelation were in his case exchanged for communion the most open and free. The High and Holy One Himself condescended to vindicate his pre-eminence in this particular. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him *in a vision*, and will speak unto him *in a dream*. My servant Moses is *not so*;...with him will I speak mouth to mouth; even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold\*." By this solemn attestation of the Giver of the prophetic gift was Moses confirmed in his superiority. And to whom? To the common mass of the people, who, undistinguished by that gift themselves, were born to reverence it in others? Nay; but over those, who could say, and with truth, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken *only* by Moses? hath He not spoken also *by us*?" Yea, even over Aaron, the next to him in point of dignity in that great mission upon which they were sent. How then was it possible to put a

\* Numb. xii. 6—8.

greater mark of difference between Moses and the prophets his fellows? There is a doubt when, or by whom that observation is made, which closes the volume of his life and writings. But had it been written after the last of the prophetic band was gone, it would have appeared with undiminished force and truth. For assuredly "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses;" even any "whom the Lord knew face to face," and with whom He spake, "as a man speaketh unto his friend\*."

We cannot help expecting, therefore, that an equal or a higher privilege must distinguish any prophet who should be like unto Moses. Without this it would be vain to attempt a parallel, sufficient to bear the import of the prediction which we are considering. For who could be esteemed a prophet like unto Moses, failing in that which was his prime distinction? Or what faith could we repose upon points of inferior resemblance, where this, the chief of all, is wanting? But if one hath appeared who in this sublime distinction as far excelled Moses as the latter excelled all other messen-

\* Deut. xxxiv. 10. Exod. xxxiii. 11.

gers of Heaven, how invincible a testimony is it, that this is He who was like, yet superior to Moses? Consider then the impressions of the character of Jesus, which the inspired histories of His life and actions are calculated to excite. Remember that those histories are written without the smallest apparent idea of *suggesting* a comparison with Moses; that, although both Jesus and His apostles appeal to Moses, and to this particular prophecy by name, yet there is not in all the New Testament any attempt towards a *specification* of any likeness, even in this, its most remarkable feature. We read in the Old Testament that God spake with Moses, “mouth to mouth;” that he saw the “similitude of the Lord;” and that his countenance, reflecting a portion of the radiance of Divinity, was seen to glisten with intolerable lustre. And in the New, we find a corresponding incident to this last in the transfiguration of the Son of Mary; and we moreover hear Him described as “dwelling in the bosom of the Father;” as having “seen the Father;” as “being one with the Father.” Nor can we forget His own declarations on the subject of His

intercourse with God, nor how singularly in accordance they are with the language of the prophecy before us: "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak\*." "I will put my words in His mouth," saith God by His servant Moses, "and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him†." Here we perceive that the language is the same, and the impression identical in either case. Now it is doubtless true in some sense of every prophet of God, that God putteth His words in his mouth. But we are sensible that this does not come up to the case which we are here considering. It was never so specified of any other prophet in particular, that his intercourse with the Almighty should be of so marked a character; and we have seen that in this respect no other prophet could or did rank by the side of Moses. It is evident therefore that the two descriptions, *without any apparent reference to each other*, do in effect

\* John xii. 49, 50.

† Deut. xviii. 18.

separate both Moses and Jesus from all the sons of men; placing them, *as prophets*, by themselves, although the distance between them is that between Deity and Humanity. Moses was no more than man; yet, *as a prophet*, he, more than any, resembled the prophet Jesus. Jesus was God and man; yet, as a prophet of God, He alone can be called "like unto Moses."

Less sublime perhaps, but equally remarkable, is the resemblance in regard to their office, and the functions which each was called upon to fulfil. The first character in which the prophet of the Hebrews appears before us, is that of the divinely-appointed instrument of a great redemption for God's people. I use the term advisedly, for Moses himself saith in allusion to it, the Lord "*redeemed* you out of the house of bondmen\*." I admit that the comparison is only between a temporal and a spiritual deliverance; a redemption from the bondage of an earthly oppressor on the one hand, and on the other, from the thralldom of sin. But then such an analogy is entirely conformable to the genius of Holy writ, which is con-

\* Deut. vii. 8.



tinually making human events and occurrences the types and shadows of things spiritual. And it cannot be denied that, as Redeemers of God's elect, it brings the two subjects of our comparison into a very striking and exclusive resemblance. It may be said, indeed, that others of the prophets besides Moses were styled *deliverers* of Israel; that God delivered them by their judges, and afterwards by their kings, and others who in later times were His instruments for redeeming them from the hand of their enemies. But the grand distinction in this case is, that the redemption from Egypt was the most signal of any which they ever experienced. Many and great as were their subsequent deliverances, this threw them all into the shade. Not one ever approached to it, either in the importance of its character, or the greatness of its fame. For in truth it was an æra in the greatest of human concerns, the concern of true religion. It was a mighty restoration of one chosen race from the abominations of a dark and almost universal idolatry. Moses therefore is to be considered not as the instrument of a mere political revolution, but as the

Author of a *religious* reformation, which forms an epoch in the annals of mankind. In this view it is undeniable that he affords a parallel, to which no subsequent prophet ever came up. The deliverance which Jesus wrought alone surpasses, while it resembles. The very expectations which the Jews had formed of Him, *as a Redeemer*, would have reduced Him to the level of Moses, and thus have verified, in a lower sense, this identical feature of resemblance. And shall we say that it was less than verified, because the redemption was of a higher order; because the tyranny overthrown is that of a Spirit invisible, and not of any mortal oppressor; and because the host redeemed, instead of one race, few in number compared with all the families of the earth, is composed of a multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues\*. We have only to view the two events, as simple acts of redemption, abstracted from their essential and inevitable points of difference, and to combine them with the position which their respective authors occupy in consequence, as the

\* Rev. vii. 9.

two greatest restorers of true religion that ever appeared in the world, to perceive at once the likeness that is between them, and also that it is *between them alone*. Nor need we hesitate to produce this character of resemblance, as a prominent and cogent part of our illustration, when we are endeavouring to substantiate the pretensions of Jesus to be the Prophet like unto Moses.

Again, Moses was a “mediator between God and man,” for the founding of a new polity, to be established upon laws of divine authority, and under God, as its immediate Head. The Jewish state, in its first institution, as compared with the other kingdoms of the earth, was strictly “the kingdom of God.” I would not build a mere verbal analogy upon two different meanings of the same expression, nor am I now speaking of the mere temporal sovereignty which God exercised over the nation of the Jews. But I am aiming at a *real* analogy deducible from the fact, that “we know that the law was spiritual.” Moses was thus the Mediator of a *spiritual* covenant, however wrought up in a system of carnal ordinances; a covenant which

contemplated spiritual ends, and was based upon spiritual blessings. In this view he alone, of all the prophets before Jesus, sustained the dignity of a divine Lawgiver. The rest were no more than *interpreters* of his law, and enforcers of its provisions. Their functions extended not to altering, or adding, or diminishing aught from its code, but only to a more detailed exposition of its ordinances of blessing and of cursing, under varying circumstances and in particular cases. In this therefore we discover a further point of exclusive resemblance between the founders of the Jewish and Christian code. For no prophet could be considered in any just sense like unto Moses, who had not borne this character; the character, let it be remembered, not of a mere human legislator for the welfare of a temporal state, but of a lawgiver, raised up, and ordained of God, for the advancement of a spiritual kingdom. This distinction, as it places Moses at an immeasurable distance from the most celebrated of human legislators, brings him proportionably nearer than any other prophet to the "one Mediator between God and man." The difference between them in this, as

in every other particular, lies in the unapproachable superiority of Jesus. His kingdom, doubtless, is a purely spiritual kingdom, and His laws such as befit a dominion of that description. But yet, as the most exalted view of Moses in his office of legislator rests, as we have seen, upon the spiritual objects and tendency of that law, which he was commissioned to give, so it is in this view that our Lord has verified the prediction of being like unto him by a nobler resemblance; a mode of verification, which must be confessed to be, not only real and just in itself, but also that which best agrees with the sublimity of prophetic truth, and the wisdom of that Spirit from whom it emanates.

But let us look a little further into this function of Mediator, and try if we cannot discover a still more striking analogy between those who bore that eminent dignity. And for this purpose let us call to mind that remarkable prayer of the Israelites, that Moses would speak to them instead of God. It was of itself, no more than the outpouring of an amazed and terrified spirit. They were constrained to utter it "for the fear of the Lord, and the glory of



His majesty." They saw "the thunders, and the lightnings, and the thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud;" and they durst not abide the terrors of the Lord; "they removed, and stood afar off." And in the greatness of their fear "they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." The prayer, in itself, exhibits, as we have observed, nothing more than the feelings natural to so awful a scene. There is no appearance of any further meaning couched beneath its words; no intimation of its having entered into the ears of Him, "whose presence then shook the earth." Yet it had entered into His ears, and was remembered by Him, on a subsequent and very remarkable occasion. "They have well spoken, (it was thus that He expressed His approval of this very prayer,) that which they have spoken." I have heard their desire, and thus it is answered; "I will raise them up a prophet like unto thee." When I give them my laws in time to come, it shall be by One to whom they may draw nigh without fear; who shall speak my words in accents

of meekness, and gentleness, and mild persuasion; whose presence shall engage them to approach with confidence, and to hearken with joy and gladness. We perceive at a glance how remarkably the prayer and the promise are combined. And where are we to look for the explanation? To the ordinary fact that the promise was completely realized in the person of every succeeding prophet? Surely this seems but a naked and meagre fulfilment of a pledge so emphatically given. Shall we then behold it more worthily and gloriously fulfilled in Him, who was “God manifested in the flesh;” who, “*being in the form of God*, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men\*,” who did thus repeat the action of His illustrious type in putting the vail upon the face of His glory, even the vail of “the earthly house of this tabernacle,” behind which the Godhead lay concealed? In Him there was “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His Person;” yet such a brightness, and such an image as mortal eyes might endure, a glory “full of

\* Ephes. ii 6, 7.

grace and truth.” Consider then this pledge, that God would speak to His people in His holiness without His awfulness. Remember how He did speak by the mouth, and ministry, of His only-begotten Son; and then judge whether this is entitled to be received as the true intention of the mind of the Spirit, when He spake of one who in this thing also should be distinguished for “a Prophet like unto Moses.”

The last point of this comparison to which I invite attention, is that spirit of *meekness*, which dwelt in Moses. For in this also we are told that he stood alone, “above all the men that were upon the face of the earth\*.” And it is too rare and singular a quality in the heart of fallen man, for us not to anticipate a more than ordinary share of its excellence in the prophet who should be like unto Moses. The occasion on which we meet with this celebrated eulogy of the Hebrew prophet, that of the rebellion of Aaron and Miriam already noticed, sufficiently explains wherein that character consists, for which he stands so highly commended. It is that frame and temper of mind, which hushes

\* Numbers xii. 3.

the revengeful passions of the heart, and persuades submission to affront and injury, unmerited and unprovoked. A rare and extraordinary spirit, which guards us against the sin of self-avenging, and enables us to rest satisfied with leaving vengeance to Him, who hath said, "I will repay." We can judge its value in His sight, by the promptitude of His interference for the vindication of His unoffending servant. The whole complexion of the incident is too plain to be misunderstood, and too striking not to arrest our observation. Moses, it is evident, cast the recompense of a most wicked contempt of his just authority upon the faithfulness of that God whom he served, and in accepting the appeal God declared of how great price in His sight that spirit of meekness is. And when we think of this, can we forget that spirit, as it appeared in the prophet Jesus? Can we forget, that as far as it was possible, among the perfections of His heart and mind, for one to exceed the rest, that one was the spirit, which forbade Him to revile, when reviled, or to threaten, when He suffered unjustly; and enabled Him to commit Himself to Him that

judgeth righteously, even as Moses committed his cause, and was avenged? Must we not remember also the place and figure which He assigns to that spirit in the precepts of His holy law; how He ranks it as the chief in that glorious pattern which He set for the imitation of His followers; how He calls upon us to learn of Him, *especially as He was meek and lowly in heart*; how, in fine, He did more “to prescribe, and transmit, and secure this grace, than any other\*?” Can we dwell upon these points, and yet refuse their testimony to Him who was like unto Moses? Can we discover the same resemblance in so rare a feature between Moses and any other prophet of God? No: for “this man, Moses, was very meek above all the men that were upon the face of the earth;” *until* the same heavenly grace shone with brighter perfection in “the mind that was in Christ Jesus.”

Here then I would rest the evidence of the fulfilment of this illustrious prophecy in the person of our Lord; and ask, with Jortin,

\* This expression is from Bishop Jeremy Taylor.



whether a similitude and correspondence so remarkable can be the effect of mere chance? Whether, if we search all the records of universal history, we shall find a man who was so like to Moses as Jesus was, or one so like to Jesus as Moses was? If we cannot find such an one, then certainly must we have “found Him, of whom Moses, in the law, as well as the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.”

Finally, let it be remembered that there is a *warning* added to this prophecy, not less remarkable than the prophecy itself. “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” the word which God spake concerning the Prophet like unto Moses. Let him reflect that if Jesus of Nazareth were He, that warning itself hath proved prophetic. For “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not;” and surely it hath been required of them. For when hath the world presented such another spectacle, of national judgments, or of individual woes? When

were ever known such “days of vengeance,” as those which have alighted upon Israel? When was ever beheld such distress upon any land, such wrath upon any people? The heart of unbelief, however hardened, can scarce refuse to admit *this* fact. Nor can the mind, which is not utterly lost to reflection, forbear to ask, “What meaneth the heat of this great anger?” And when did it arise, but in the instant of that awful cry, “His blood be on us and on our children?” And whence did it begin, but from that fearful desolation, of which Jesus Himself so vainly forewarned them? It is vain to deny the truth of events which are still before our eyes; nor less vain is it to dispute their connection with the sufferings and death of the prophet Jesus. The awful truth therefore confronts us with a distinctness which it would be insanity to overlook. They rejected the Prophet like unto Moses, and God required it of them, as He had said. And shall any remain insensible to a warning so proclaimed, and already so faithfully verified? Shall not the same avenger of unbelief require it of others, if others fall after the like example? Well

then ; let the infidel and the believer both receive from hence their several warning. Let the one consider, if yet he can consider, that “because of unbelief, they fell ;” and let the other, who thinketh, perhaps rightly thinketh, he standeth, “take heed lest he fall.”

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## LECTURE VI.

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### MATTHEW XXIV. 14.

*And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come.*

IF the history of a life such as never had its parallel in the annals of mankind, a life derived from a virgin mother, and the spirit of the Eternal Father ; ushered in by signs in heaven and in earth, by the brightness of an unknown star, and the voices of an unseen world ; distinguished in its course by works of wonder, and of power no less than divine ; which, passing through the portals of death unharmed, held on its imperishable way, until it ended, as it began, in miracles, and glory, and a visible departure to the realms of light ;—again, if a character composed of such excellences as pass the attainment of mortal man, comprehend-

ing in one every separate perfection of all the noblest examples in the world; and surpassing each in degree, as the sun buries in his flood of brightness the lesser lights of heaven; a character, albeit not exempt from passing weakness, yet untarnished by the stain of sin, representing in itself all things that “are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report;”—finally, if a doctrine revealing truths concerning God, more sublime than human intellect could reach; concerning man, more excellent than were ever taught in any age or school of wisdom in the world; a doctrine perfective of human nature and human happiness both for time, and for eternity to come;—

If, I say, a life made up of such incidents, a character composed of such elements, a doctrine consisting of such truths as these, can be gathered and culled from the scattered predictions of ages, and if all these are described with simplicity and without effort, in the history of One who stands *alone* among the children of men, may we not reasonably conclude that to be a true interpretation of prophecy, which refers all these predictions to Him, even Jesus of



Nazareth, the Son of Mary and of God, in whom the whole was combined and realized?

This is the sum of what we have attempted to prove in that portion of our task which is accomplished. We shall now turn to another chain of evidence, no less extraordinary, and even more conclusive than this; for it is the result of *facts*, of which our own observation will enable us to judge the truth. We affirm therefore, in the next place, that Jesus is demonstrated to be the Christ, not more certainly by these tokens of His personal identity, than by the wonderful *events*, which agreeably to the word of prophecy signalized His coming into the world. If nature laboured when He sank into the tomb, and physical convulsions attended His reappearance and triumph over Death, so was His life the harbinger of more astonishing revolutions, religious, political and moral. He was "set for the rise and falling of many," not in Israel only, but in all the world. Thrones the most powerful were to own His sway; sceptres the most ancient were to be overthrown when they opposed Him. The gods of the heathen were destined to stoop and totter from

their shrines, while their worshippers, afraid any longer to bow down before the work of their own hands, made haste to forsake their altars for His.

Of this nature are the facts, which will furnish the substance of what I have yet to lay before you. They embrace a period commencing from the Ascension of Jesus and continued to the passing hour; and we are able also to try them *prospectively* with reference to their final and predicted consummation. The spirit of prophecy *foreshewed* them all, as the signs of the Messiah's kingdom; the coming of Jesus *fulfilled* them all, and therefore they are His testimony for ever; a testimony which shall remain to confound the despiser of every future age, until that day when the light of truth shall break even upon his dark soul, and he shall "behold, and wonder, and perish."

Let us consider then, first, that this Jesus is He which planted and established the religion of the Gospel. And in affirming this, do we not affirm the most astonishing change which was ever borne upon the wings of Time? In every point of view it stands alone. No

revolution can be produced in the history of the world which may compare with it, either for extent or permanence. It was not political merely, nor moral, nor religious, but it was *all of these* together. It changed the face of society, and regenerated the spirits of men. It was a revolution of governments, and of thoughts; of kingdoms, and of hearts; of institutions and of manners. Its pure and holy light penetrated the cabinets of princes, and the shrines of heathen worship; banishing cruelty and impurity both from the sanctions of law, and the solemnities of religion. It saved the lives of infants, and lightened the misery of slaves. It humanised the sufferings of the captive and the criminal. It curbed the barbarous thirst for war, and fightings, and bloodshed, and disposed both rulers and ruled to cultivate the arts of peace and mutual kindness and good will. These changes, which are every where now so visible, the preaching of Jesus brought to pass. *We* are living witnesses of their grandeur, and their permanence. We behold the same teaching followed by the same effects, wheresoever its operation enjoys free scope: constantly and visibly

*advancing* them among the nations, which are already blessed with its light; and as surely *producing* them in those regions which lie buried in pagan darkness.

When we contemplate the magnitude and extent of this new Power, we feel that it is scarcely a figure, to call it “a kingdom set up,” over all the kingdoms of the world\*. Let Jesus of Nazareth be who or what He may, let Him be God, or Angel, or Prophet, or mere man, He may well be styled “the Prince of the kings of the earth,” in a sense at once singular and true. For if he is a true sovereign, to whose laws and institutions both kings and their subjects yield obedience, who has power to model the constitution of states, and to regulate the jurisprudence of empires; if he is a true sovereign, the emblem of whose sovereignty is borne upon banners and crowns imperial; then hath Jesus obtained the dignity of King of kings, and Ruler of earthly princes.

If the Spirit of prophecy did ever testify of the revolutions of this our world, it will hardly be contested, that a change like this was a sub-

\* Daniel ii. 44.

ject worthy of such testimony. And such a change we find described in many of those predictions of the Messiah, which are the clearest, and least liable to cavil. Every striking feature which the facts have developed, may be traced in the visions of prophecy. Out of Sion it was declared that His law should go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; the law of Him, who was to be set *as a king* upon the holy hill of Zion\*; a law superior alike in character and efficacy to the laws of earthly princes, in that its enactments should reach to the “inward parts,” and be written upon “the fleshly tables of the heart.” Moreover His reign was to be a reign of peace, and his title, “the Prince of peace†;” because in His days the sword should be turned into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning hook, and nation should cease to lift up sword against nation, and war should not be learned any more‡. It was a reign too, under which barbarity should disappear, and the feelings of humanity gain strength; and savage natures be tamed, and the heart of cruelty melt beneath the tear of mercy.

\* Ps. ii. 6.

† Isa. ix. 6.

‡ Isa. ii. 4. Mic. iv. 3.



All this is come to pass, even as it was pictured before in the splendid images of prophetic truth; the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, with a little child to lead them; the cow and the bear feeding, their young lying down together, and the lion eating straw like the ox; the sucking child also playing on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child putting his hand on the cockatrice' den\*. How perfect the peace and the security which mankind should enjoy under the benign sway of the Messiah! How like unto it that peace and security which we owe to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus!

It would be tedious to advert to the testimony of prophecy upon every point of this interesting comparison, or I might remind you, how to Him, albeit "a servant of rulers, kings should see and arise, and princes also should worship;" again, how "kings were to be His nursing fathers, and their queens His nursing mothers†;" how He was to cleanse His people from all their idols, and to cut off the name of idols

\* Isaiah xi. 6—8.

† Isaiah xlix. 7, 23.

out of the land\*. Ye know with how profuse a hand these and such like intimations are scattered over the page of ancient prophecy; and it is only to change the future into the present or the past, to convert them into faithful histories of that which our eyes have seen.

But it may be said, and it is true, that the present condition of the world is far from realizing the full import of prophetic language. It may be said, and it is true, that nations many and mighty know nothing of the preaching of Jesus; that the universal dominion of peace and holiness is as yet scarce more than a prophetic dream; that wars, and persecutions, and crimes and wickedness, still triumph where the Gospel is professed; and where it is not, Idolatry rears her throne with all and more than her old abominations. We have only to look beyond the comparatively narrow bounds of Christendom to the mighty empires of the East, or the trackless deserts of the West, to the thickly-peopled regions of the African land, or the countless islands of the Southern seas, to behold at this day the most revolting of spectacles in the religious

\* Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Zech. xiii. 2.

rites and practices of man. But to this we make answer, not by denying its truth, but by pointing to what the preaching of Jesus *has* effected. For from that alone ought we to judge what it is *adapted* to effect, and what it will continue to effect in time to come. We pretend not that the word of prophecy is verified in its *fulness* by what we yet see of the reign of Gospel truth; but we affirm that in all its progress hitherto, it has gone on to realize the predictions of the Messiah's kingdom. And we appeal without alarm to *any* test of fair and candid observation, whether every year is not bringing them to a nearer approximation, and more visible identity of character. Great therefore we hold must be the reverses which threaten its fall, and mighty the change in its effects, before we yield to the painful discovery that the religion of Jesus is not the reign of God's Anointed.

It is time however that we turn to the next of those astonishing events which signalized the æra of His coming. And if the planting of the Gospel be a sign and a marvel in the annals of the human race, no less so is the extinction

of that divinely-instituted polity which had gathered around it the reverence of more than fifteen hundred years. Emanating from Him, who in this work, if in any, might be expected to manifest Himself as the Immutable, it seemed destined to wear out, according to the strictest tenor of its promulgation, the term of an *everlasting* covenant. Popular belief, we are sure, assigned to it an existence coeval with the works of creation. It did not indeed refuse to contemplate its extinction: but it could identify this with nothing less than the dissolution of the material universe. And in truth, until within a brief period of "the end," few could have conjectured how nigh it was. The mighty temple stood, the wonder of all who gazed upon its strength. Its ordinances flourished in all the strictness of unimpaired observance. Its altars teemed with their appointed victims, as in the days of their earliest sanctity. No oblation was withheld, no hour of prayer forgotten, no symptom of declining zeal appeared. Yet a few brief years and the whole became as though it had never been. One great, one overwhelming flood of vengeance buried all in a common ruin, and

temple, and victim, and priest, and worshipper, were "even as a dream when one awaketh." Whether we regard the fact itself, or the extraordinary mode in which it was brought to pass, the testimony of prophecy is equally wonderful and convincing. The ruin of the city, and the desolation of the land, and the abiding dispersion of her children, are pourtrayed with an exactness, and fidelity of colouring, which no scepticism can gainsay. Moses himself, while laying the foundations of that polity, foresaw the sad spectacle of its extinction, and even in sight of the fair but polluted land, upon which his people gazed with all the avidity of promised possession, he beheld their children plucked from off it, amid flames, and blood, and famine, and pestilence, and mutual hate. There rose up before him the destroying nation from afar, of the eagle symbol, and strange tongue, and fierce countenance; and the straitness wherewith they distressed his people in all their gates, is pourtrayed to the minutest shade of horror. For then man's eye was evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children, which famine suffered



him to leave; the tender and delicate woman also, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, even her eye was evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her children which she had borne; while she did eat them *secretly* for want of all things, in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith the enemy distressed them. And when, at length, from being as the stars of heaven for multitude, they were left few in number among their enemies, and their high and fenced walls, wherein they trusted, came down throughout all their land, then the remnant that was left, less happy than the myriads who lay beneath their ruins, departed to receive their portion of the unresting foot, and trembling heart, and life hanging in doubt before them. Surely all these curses *have* “come upon them, and pursued them, and overtaken them, and are yet upon them for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon their seed, as it is this day\*.”

Thus far have I described these awful scenes, in the words of Moses, the man of God. But ye know how “all the prophets, as many as have

\* Deut. xxviii. 45, 46.

spoken, have likewise foretold of these days\*.” Ye know too, how unsuspiciously the testimony of historic truth has borne out every fact, and every woe; and how writers of that, and every subsequent age, travellers of various periods, and divers countries, of all creeds, and of no creed, Christians, Jews, and Pagans, friends and adversaries of the Gospel, have alike been witnesses of the truth, and steadfastness, and minuteness of the word of prophecy. Nay, ye yourselves can discern, in a thousand instances, where the stream of prophecy still flows on, and gather from that which your own eyes behold, a confirmation of the annals of the past.

Thus fell the city of God, and with it the institutions which had their birth amid the awful glories of Sinai. And thus it was to perish, according to the sure word of prophecy, and about that very time. For a time was appointed, and a period determined, in the counsel of the Most High, “to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy†.” It is not necessary in this place to engage in a disquisition of the week’s of the prophet Daniel.

\* Acts iii. 24.

† Daniel ix. 24.

It is sufficient for our purpose, that every probable computation brings their close to the days of Jesus. The truth of this is apparent in the signs of the time, and the sentiments of the age, in which He lived. Every Jewish bosom beat with a glowing hope, which it was expected that each passing hour might realise; and to the latest moment of irremediable desolation, that hope forsook them not. Yea, even unto strange and distant cities the fame of His coming was gone forth; and “the Desire of nations” absorbed the thoughts of nations, and “the isles” were seen “waiting for His law.” Fraud and cunning, which till then found no scope for successful enterprise, took advantage of the all-pervading hope. False Christs innumerable thronged within all possible limits of the prophetic computation; and when these could no further be extended, they disappeared with the cause that gave them birth. In that singular interval, unparalleled before or since, Jesus of Nazareth came into the world; the *only* man, “approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs,” who proclaimed aloud His fearless appeal to the testimony of “the Spirit of prophecy.” And truly

and faithfully, at His coming, was fulfilled every sign of the days of the Messiah; the sign of Jacob, for then “the sceptre departed from Judah, and no lawgiver sprang since from between his feet\* ;” the sign of Haggai, for with no other “glory” but His, can that latter house be ever filled†. Israel was now, as Hosea had been commissioned to foreshew, “without king or prince, without sacrifice or image, without ephod or teraphim‡.” The “new covenant||,” of which Jeremiah spake, had appeared, that the decayed and old might vanish away; and the sacrifice and the oblation were made to cease, according to the sad forebodings of Daniel§. It followed, therefore, that He must needs be come, in whom these various signs should be combined. But who was there then or since to bear the part of the Messiah, if not the prophet Jesus of Nazareth? Or what law to succeed into the place of that which was gone, if not the religion which He taught? How truly did it answer to every prophetic token of its character, as opposed to that which it appeared to super-

\* Genes. xlix. 10.

† Haggai ii. 7.

‡ Hosea iii. 4.

|| Jerem. xxxi. 31.

§ Daniel ix. 27.

sede! If into the place of those sacrifices, by which the *remembrance* of sins was made continually, there was to succeed a covenant, bearing the glorious inscription, “sins and iniquities remembered no more,” is not this the religion of the Gospel? If for that service, “which stood in meats, and drinks, and washings, and carnal ordinances,” was to be substituted an offering more befitting the nature of God, “a broken spirit, and a contrite heart,” is not this the religion of the Gospel? If in contrast to that law, whose truest description, was a “wall of partition” between mankind, the better covenant was to unite the human race in one, so that under it “*all* the families of the earth might be blessed, is not this also the religion of the Gospel? Again, therefore, and by a new deduction of prophetic signs, we have reached the same unvarying truth, and have found, although the rulers of Israel knew it not, that this Jesus is indeed the very Christ.

Thus variously, thus powerfully, thus constantly hath the God of Heaven borne witness of His Son; and evinced His desire, that none, to whom the record is vouchsafed, should perish



for lack of the faith which saves. And can it be true that when God hath done so much, man can *want* that faith, and be guiltless? Can it be true, as infidels affirm, that we are in no degree responsible for the *religious* convictions of our minds; that if we can believe, well; if not, we are helpless, and sin lieth not at the door? Or did he speak more truly, who said, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but *now* they have no cloak for their sin\*." It is easy to speak of conviction, as a simple act of the understanding over which we possess no control; and by such sophistry to free ourselves from the fear of being punished for that which is no subject of moral retribution. But *religious* conviction, let us remember, is intimately dependent on the moral dispositions of the heart; and therefore the spirit itself beareth witness "that with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." This alone can explain why faith cometh not *always* by the hearing of the word of God; and why, even from the life-giving "wells of salvation," so many have drawn

\* John xv. 22, 24.

poison to their souls. From hence alone can we understand, how the devout centurion should be so forward to embrace the truths propounded by Christ's minister; and the noble Ethiop so readily exclaim, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" while the same truths are dismissed by a Gallio with contempt, and by a Felix with an evasive pretext, and scorned by the self-sufficient wisdom of the Greek, and blasphemed by the ignorant fanaticism of the Jew. Yes; the word of God *may* be heard in vain because "the honest and good heart" is wanting. If the seed be the same, the harvest must depend upon the nature and culture of the soil. *Before* faith can take root, there must be Integrity, Candour, Sincerity of mind; there must be a perception and love of goodness; there must be a reverent sense of God's perfections and a *willingness* to know and to do His will. These are qualities of a moral nature, the acquirement of which depends in some sort on ourselves. They are immediately connected with that liberty to good or evil, of which we feel ourselves possessed, and apart from which we can form no apprehension of responsibility, whether

for behaviour or belief. *Before* faith is formed in the heart, these qualities conduct to a course of action strictly moral. They impel him, who is not yet convinced of the truth, to give it a full and unprejudiced examination. They engage him to prosecute his task with a serious solicitude proportioned to its importance. They forbid him to desist, until he has faithfully bestowed upon it all the leisure and abilities he is master of, and has called in every means within his reach to assist him to a right decision. He will not be weary in "searching the Scriptures," that he may rightly apprehend the objects of his faith. No portion of its evidence will be suffered to remain, without undergoing his earnest scrutiny. The aid of books, the judgment of wise and faithful men, will be summoned to the all-engrossing work. And, above all, he will have recourse to the fountain of light, the God in whom he *does* believe, crying out in the passionate sincerity of an honest heart, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief."

But if, on the contrary, the qualities of his heart be the *reverse* of those which are here supposed, if for Candour and Integrity and the

love of God, there he found Pride or Prejudice, or Indolence, or Lust; if he be a libertine in thought or action; if he be a seeker of notoriety, who would rather be pointed at, as a free-thinker, among his fellows, than pass in obscurity on his path through life; if these, or any like these, be the elements of his moral character, why then he will conduct himself towards "the testimony of Jesus," as such a character persuades. He will remain an unbeliever be the evidences of religion what they may; and unless Mercy should step out of her wonted course for the conversion of his heart, his eyes can never be opened until the day of "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

Oh! fear then to repose upon the perilous decision that you can be innocent in unbelief. Fear to trust that you may go unconvinced by "the testimony of Jesus," and yet "flee from the wrath to come." At least remember how, in all reason and godly wisdom this should be your last, your most reluctant conclusion. Reflect yet once, how very sure you ought to be, that every help to faith has been sought and tried; that you have read, thought, prayed, con-

versed with saints on earth, and communed with God in Heaven; and above all, that you have looked again and again into the most secret recesses of your heart, and have found there no trace of moral canker, eating away the root and life of faith. It seems as if, in such a case, supposing it possible, a righteous God *must* pardon; but it may be doubted, whether before the judgment-seat of Christ *one* such infidel will be found.

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## LECTURE VII.

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JOHN V. 36.

*The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*

IF in place of those miracles of His almighty power, to which our Lord here appeals, we substitute the scarcely less miraculous changes which have ensued in the world through His coming, we seem to adduce an argument as strong to prove Him to be the promised Christ, as that which this text, in its original application, supplies for His being “a teacher sent from God.” For those changes, in all their lengthened and various consequences, may most properly be styled His “works;” and as the works of one, who claimed to be the Prophet “that should come,” they correspond most exactly with those, which, from the beginning, “the Father had given Him to finish.” Pro-

phesy and History have already been compared by us, in the two grandest of human revolutions, and have been found to assimilate and accord with each other, like the corresponding edges of an indenture. Were the argument left here, it would seem difficult to withstand the force of its testimony to Jesus; still more difficult to believe that it will not abundantly suffice to leave infidelity without excuse. It is capable however of being strongly corroborated by much that has since befallen in the world. The stream of prophetic history rolls on its course through long ages yet to come, looking stedfastly to the end, both “of that which is abolished,” and of that which has been established in its room; embracing facts and circumstances relating to each, most wonderful and inconceivable of their kind, many of which the world has already seen fulfilled, and more are yet awaiting their fulfilment. And although we may not be able to speak with certainty, or perhaps without presumption, of those “times and seasons” of prophecy unfulfilled, “which the Father hath put in His own power\*,” yet we may judge whether

\* Acts i. 7.

the aspect of past and passing events bears a *probable* course and tendency towards its completion. And if from thence we can discover, that all things are ordered in a way entirely *favourable* for the predicted issues, this cannot but beget in us a very strong conviction, that the event will justify their truth; that, although "the vision must be for its appointed time," yet "at the end it shall speak, and not lie;" though it tarry, we may wait for it in full assurance of faith, because "it will surely come, it will not tarry\*."

Let us turn then, in the first instance, to the predicted fortunes of the chosen race in the days of the Messiah, and try what further evidence we can thence collect in confirmation of "the testimony of Jesus." Foremost in every page stands the threatened judgment of their entire and unexampled dispersion. Among all the vicissitudes of calamity and prosperity, to which for many ages they were subjected, this was the last and universal woe, from which none of their tribes was to escape. The kingdom was rent in twain, and ten of her twelve great

\* Habakkuk ii. 3.

families withdrew from the bosom of the daughter of Sion. But they could not decline their prophetic destiny, as easily as they renounced their fealty. They differed only in this, that the judgment overtook them some ages earlier than the residue of their brethren. It was long ere Judah's hour arrived, that she also must be removed, but it came at length, and the doom of prophecy was complete, when her house was "left unto her desolate." A destiny so singular had never yet befallen either that or any other people. Perhaps no nation on earth had experienced so bitterly as they the miseries of slavery in the lands of their enemies; but then it was always a captive *nation*, under the rod of a single oppressor. It was so in the house of their Egyptian bondage, when, as a nation, they were enslaved, and experienced a national deliverance. It was so likewise when they sat "by the waters of Babylon," and swelled their current with unavailing tears. The great body of the people was there, saving only the few, whom compassion or indifference permitted to linger among the scenes of their then departed greatness. But widely different to these is the

predicted character of their last and direst desolation; for this was to be nothing less than an entire disruption of the body politic into its individual elements, like the scattered fragments of a wreck upon the waters. The strength of the *literal* descriptions of this awful woe can scarcely be exceeded. Scattered they were to be “among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other\*,” to be “removed into all the kingdoms of the earth†;” and to be “wanderers among the nations‡.” Yet, if possible, these descriptions are exceeded by the livelier *images* of the prophetic pencil; when the doomed race is pictured forth, as being “*sifted* among the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve§;” and the whole remnant of them, grain by grain, as it were, “scattered into all the winds||.”

These very conditions, however, of their captivity might naturally lead us to suppose that although alike sharers in the common misery of being exiles from their land, yet the burden of individual suffering would vary with the

\* Deut. xxviii. 64.

† Jerem. xv. 4.

‡ Hosea ix. 17.

§ Amos ix. 9.

|| Ezek. v. 10.



varying circumstances of their exile; that if haply the wanderer's lot was cast in a land of civilization and humanity, his exile would at least be the sum of what he had to bear; he would at least enjoy his portion in the privileges of its inhabitants, and the charities of its social state, and find his life and substance secure under the protecting shadow of mild and equal laws. But no; the Spirit of Prophecy discloses a scene almost inconceivably the reverse. It mattered not to what spot of earth he might be driven. In enlightened or barbarian climes his prospect was the same. To the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, yea even to the gentle and compassionate of heart, who had a tear for every other sufferer, and every other woe, the outcast of Israel was to be a "by-word, and a taunt, and a curse and a hissing, and a reproach\*." No spot on earth could proffer rest to his weary foot, or peace to his trembling heart, or safety to his persecuted life. The transcript of his crushed and despairing spirit could alone add a deeper shade to the melancholy

\* Deut. xxviii. 37. Jerem. xxiv. 9: xxix. 18.

picture; in the morning this his prayer, "Would God it were even;" and at even, "Would God it were morning." But, wonderful to relate, though "all these curses were to come upon them, and pursue them, and overtake them," yet for all that, God said, "when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly\*." And though "their plagues were to be wonderful, and the plagues of their seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance," yet He that scattered, would gather and keep them, so that "not the least grain of the sifted corn should fall and perish upon the earth." For "these be the days of vengeance," and many though they be, days of glory are yet behind. Their night of grief is recompensed by a coming morn "of everlasting joy upon their heads," when the spirit of heaviness shall put on the garments of praise, "and sorrow and mourning flee away." Bright prospects, in the land which God swore unto their fathers, rise up among the visions of future time, when God "will bring again the captivity of his people,"

\* Levit. xxvi. 44.

and “plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which He hath given them\*.” All shall then be assembled, the children both of the former and the latter dispersion, “the outcasts of Israel, and the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth†.” “And they shall be one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children, for ever‡.” The very spectacle of their return is presented in colours that give to it almost the force of a present reality. A voice hath whispered to the daughter of Sion, that “her warfare is accomplished, and her iniquity is pardoned§.” And her children are heard exhorting every one his neighbour, and every one his brother, saying, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up||.” And loud and wide is the note of preparation for the assembling of that mighty host, when “the

\* Amos ix. 14, 15.

† Isaiah xi. 12.

‡ Ezek. xxxvii. 22, 25.

§ Isaiah xl. 2.

|| Hosea vi. 1.

ships of Tarshish wait to bring their sons from far, their silver and their gold with them;" and "the sons of strangers" are employed in "building up their walls\*," and in preparing the way of the people, so that the land shall be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, "and place shall not be found for them†." For then "Zion shall no more be termed, Forsaken, neither her land any more be termed, Desolate; but her name shall be, The redeemed of the Lord; and she shall be called, Sought out; A city not forsaken‡."

Such are the visions of "the latter days," as they regard the chosen people of God; visions surely too remarkable not to be understood, if ever they were realized beneath the sun. Look round then upon the people to whom they refer, and judge between prophecy and fact. Their past history is not unknown; their present condition is before our eyes. Extinct in one sense, they yet live to be the wonder, and the ænigma of the world. Blotted out as *a nation*, they survive as *a people*. Without a country of their own, they share with the inhabitants of

\* Isai. LX. 9, 10.

† Zech. x. 10.

‡ Isai. LXii. 4, 12.

almost every country of the globe. Born in the several lands of their dispersion, they are natives, and yet *no* natives. They belong not to *the race*. They blend not with the children of the soil. Crumbled, as it were, into atoms, and in that condition *sprinkled* among all the nations of the earth, they remain as *distinct* from all the world, as when their fathers, few in number, assembled in the land of Goshen. The more attentively we contemplate this singular state of theirs, the more marvellous it must appear in our eyes. What, to ordinary experience, could seem more improbable, than the preservation of a single race under such circumstances? How is it that the massacres and persecutions of centuries have thinned their ranks in vain; and that the hapless race, whom all the world conspired to hunt down, has not long since been exterminated? How is it that they themselves, the victims of universal hate, have not striven to cast off the terrible distinction, and to lose themselves among the nations, even as the drops of rain are lost in the ocean with which they mingle? Yet under circumstances like these, they not only have



existed, but increased; not only have increased, but prospered. The world's wealth is theirs; and how oft have they been compelled to place the weapon in the hand of their oppressors? The wheels of the mightiest governments of modern days have been moved by their assistance. Wars are proclaimed, and treaties guaranteed, not without their potent intervention. And although still an humbled and unobtrusive race, none are ignorant of their real sway, nor of the almost omnipotent controul which they can exert over the destinies of states and empires.

Again, contrast their wonderful *preservation*, in all ages, with the fate of their numerous and powerful oppressors; who, following the ordinary mutations of human things, have risen and disappeared before them. Of all the people upon earth, they alone date their existence from the earliest records of the human race. They alone have been coeval with the mighty empires of old, which filled the world with their greatness, and their fame. By all they were hated, and by all oppressed; and "where is now the fury of the oppressor?" The Egyptian, the Assyrian,

the Babylonian, the Roman; where has either a representative upon earth? But for the hapless, homeless son of Abraham, where is the land that knows him not? Nor is it improbable, that this singular contrast, between their stability and the ephemeral sway of their oppressors, may ere long again be verified. It is now nearly half a century since the sagacity of enquirers into the probable fulfilment of prophetic events, began to note the symptoms of decay in that barbarian power by which, in these later ages, the sanctuary has been trodden down. And what has been its subsequent history, but a gradual decline to the feeblest of human despotisms? Have we not ourselves beheld it almost within the grasp that could have crushed it out of being, and rescued, if rescued indeed it is, by far other strength, than its own? Yes, the crescent wanes, and its fading lustre seems hastening to become extinct. But the star of Judah's destiny, like that round which all others rise and set, shines fixed as "the sure word of Prophecy."

The *external* aspect and condition however of the chosen race forms but half of the pro-

phetic picture. A portion of greater interest, their *spiritual* and *moral* state, remains yet to be considered. For this also is among the things concerning them, which are noted in the Scriptures of truth, and combines with the other to the same conclusion, that they are fulfilling their prophetic destiny. Persecution and exile are a bitter lot; but a heavier burden than this was laid upon them. "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes\*;" — "for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid†." He who desires a commentary on this awful doom need not be far to seek. He will find it abundantly in the written discourses and traditions of those, who have been accounted "their wise and prudent men;" and in the religious system of modern Judaism, mainly built upon that foundation. Such a tissue of profaneness, puerility, and ignorance upon all the great points of religion and duty,

\* Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

† Isaiah xxix. 14.

could hardly be conceived to have been framed by men in possession of “the oracles of God.” Blasphemies the most revolting against the majesty of the Most High; speculations of the wildest order upon the great subjects connected with the future world, the nature of spirits and of the human soul, and the several states of reward and punishment; modes of expiation and atonement for sins, upon the virtue of which it passes belief that a rational man could build a serious reliance; the estimate of moral character, founded upon a *numerical* computation and comparison of virtues and vices; and many of these monstrous fancies based upon applications of Scripture which would provoke a smile at their absurdity, if every feeling of levity were not merged in awe at the profundity of that spiritual darkness. These, and many more such, are the features which will meet his eye, who seeks to know of their religious and moral state; and he will be driven to the words of prophecy, that he may give adequate expression to his feelings at the discovery. For verily, he will say, “the Lord hath poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep;—and the vision of all

is become unto them, as the words of a book, that is sealed\*.” They do indeed “grope at noon day, as the blind gropeth in darkness†.”

But as the state of their dispersion meets the promised restoration to the land of their forefathers, so likewise does this *spiritual* bondage lend all possible confirmation to the glorious predictions of a far nobler redemption. We are assured from the revelations of elder time, that after “abiding many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or image, without ephod or teraphim,” they shall “return, and seek the Lord their God and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.” And we are told besides of a day of mourning, the like of which was never seen in Israel; a day which shall present the awful spectacle of a nation’s grief, equalling in every individual bosom the grief of “one that mourneth for his only son.” And “every family shall mourn apart in bitterness, as though each were in bitterness for its first-born; and the greatness of that grief shall be, (it is so declared) for looking upon Him, whom they have

\* Isai. xxix 10, 11.

† Deut. xxviii. 29.



pierced\*.” But its fruit shall be blessed; for it is the melting of hearts of stone from the induration of ages of unbelief; and out of it shall grow a new and holy spirit, even “the spirit of grace, and of supplications.” And “they shall say no more, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord:’” neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more†.” In the light of these predictions, (it is thus that the Spirit of prophecy under the New Covenant hath discoursed upon this “mystery,”) we ought not to be ignorant, “that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” The like limitation had already been applied by our Lord to the other portion of their prophetic doom. “Jerusalem,” He said, “should be trodden down of the Gentiles,” but only “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Then shall that be brought to pass which God spake by Moses; that He would “provoke His people to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation He would anger them.”

\* Zech. xii. 10.

† Jerem. iii. 16.

The world has already seen, how “through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles;” it is yet to see how, through this dispensation in return, the chosen seed shall be “provoked to jealousy.” And so it shall be known, that as we “in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through our mercy they also may obtain mercy\*.” Here at least is a scheme of prophecy consistent with itself, and harmonising perfectly with the course of past events. It cannot be gainsaid that the people of God are *actually existing* in a state which prepares them for *all* their prophetic prospects. They are *kept* (might we not say, *miraculously* kept?) in a state of readiness for the manifestation of God’s purposes concerning them; those purposes being evidently a triumphant return to that land, which is theirs by an inalienable right; and together with this, the final and signal renunciation of the religion of their forefathers.

Here then, as it regards them, we may bring our comparison between History and Pro-

\* Rom. x. 19, to the end; and chap. xi.

phesy to a close. If the conclusions, which we have derived from thence be true, then are ours the days of the Messiah's kingdom; days which began to be numbered from the life and ministry, the deeds and sufferings of Jesus, and which will expire not until He "comes again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead." "But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth?" Unbelief in all its various aspects must then endure His scrutiny. Whatever were its cause, and nature and degree, whether it sprang from a weak or a wicked heart, from an erring or a perverted understanding, every circumstance that comes in aggravation of its guilt, every plea that can extenuate its sinfulness, will then be weighed in the balances of truth. And if haply there be one, whose want of faith was more the fruit of ignorance than of sin, he will know, for his consolation at that awful hour, that he has not a judge "who cannot be touched with the feeling of his infirmity." But who shall plead for him that hath striven to diffuse the poison of infidelity in hearts which else had never felt

its deadly workings? that took delight in spreading the net of sophistry to catch the feet of the inexperienced and unwary? or in launching the shaft of ridicule against the truth of God, until the reverence for sacred things was gone? Oh! what shall be his portion in that judgment, which he has so braved, and what shall he answer when he is reproved? If it were possible that he could be guiltless in the unbelief of his *own* heart, guiltless he cannot be of that which he has caused. Deeply answerable must he be for the souls whose ruin his fiendish endeavours have wrought. He dares not plead his zeal for sacred truth, when he stands before the Searcher of hearts. Such hypocrisy could scarce deceive the feeble worms, whose understanding is on a level with his own. The honest infidel, if such there be, must feel his unbelief *as a calamity*; and no desire of serving the cause of truth would lead him to inflict that, which he himself feels as a calamity, upon others. No; he who earnestly strives against his own infidelity, *may be* a godly and an innocent man; but he who labours in the work of making others infidels, *must be* ruled

by the great enemy of man. The Scripture hath said, "There is a sin unto death;" and no prayer need be made for that. It cannot, shall not be forgiven, "neither in this world, neither in that which is to come." That sin may exist in more forms than one; more, perhaps, than we are able to discern. But I should fear, it must be his who hath writ and wrought against the faith of the Son of God; and laboured to drag the souls, which He *died* to save, into the gulf of everlasting perdition.

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## LECTURE VIII.

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### REVELATION XIX. 10.

*The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.*

THE portion of this testimony, which we last considered, is that which refers to the condition of the ancient people of God in "the latter days." By comparing the prophetic description with the past and actual circumstances of that extraordinary race, we find abundant reason to be convinced that these *are* "the latter days," and that Jesus of Nazareth is "the Christ of God." The same Spirit of prophecy which drew this portion of the picture with such astonishing exactness of truth, completed its testimony by equally clear and copious views of the character and progress of the Messiah's kingdom. We have formerly found occasion to pursue this topic to some extent, when we came

to notice the first planting and promulgation of the religion which Jesus taught\*. It was necessary, at that point of the argument, to shew its perfect accordance with the New Covenant of the prophetic Messiah; to prove that the genius and character of both were the same; that the Gospel of Jesus had wrought the predicted changes both in the religious and political aspect of the world; and finally, that every passing year is identifying the two more perfectly. In this concluding Lecture, therefore, we have to carry on the comparison to those leading features in the prophecies concerning the kingdom of Christ, which have as yet passed without our notice. These refer chiefly to two points: its perpetual duration; and its universal extent throughout the world. Unlike those earthly powers, in the midst of which, as Daniel saith, the God of Heaven should “set it up†,”—it was to survive, after they had experienced the common fate of the kingdoms of this world. It was to bear a *paramount* sway, so that in comparison it might be said, that “the kingdom *was not left* to other people;” but it was “to

\* Lecture vi.

† Daniel ii. 44.

break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and itself to stand for ever." This was but the echo of the voice of prophecy in every former age. "The heavens might vanish away like smoke, and the earth wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein might die in like manner; but that salvation was to be for ever, and that righteousness should not be abolished\*." While of the great Prophet Himself it was proclaimed, that "of the increase of His government and peace there should be no end†;" that "His seed also should be made to endure for ever, and His throne as the days of heaven‡." Thus every disciple of Moses had "heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever§;" and though blinded in all else that relates to the kingdom of his Messiah, God gave him a right understanding in this, that it was to be a dominion unimpaired by time, and exempt from the vicissitudes of human things.

We may observe that this very character of perpetuity was emphatically claimed for the Gospel of Jesus at the period of its earliest

\* Isaiah li. 6.

† Isaiah ix. 7.

‡ Psalm lxxxix. 29.

§ John xii. 34.

announcement. The herald from above, who bore the first tidings of “that holy thing, which should be born,” predicted at the same time His imperishable rule in the very language of the prophets of old: “He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end\*.” This persuasion grew with the growth of the Gospel, and strengthened with its strength; so that every convert knew, and believed in his heart, that he had “received a kingdom which cannot be moved†.” And finally, ere the vision and the prophecy were sealed, a voice from Heaven proclaimed anew the glorious truth “that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever‡.”

Equally forcible are those prophecies, which refer to the other point, which we have mentioned, the *universality* of this new dominion. In striking contrast to the *usual* progression of prophetic light, from dark to clear, from dimness unto day, this leading truth was almost from the first discovered in the plainest terms. For

\* Luke i. 33.

† Heb. xii. 28.

‡ Rev. xi. 15.

in Him, who was to come, it was promised that *all* nations, *all* the families of the earth, should be blessed. And that no exception might be taken from the temporary preference, which was extended to the chosen seed, God is heard addressing the "Anointed;" "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth\*."

Throughout the writings of almost every successive prophet may be traced the same conspicuous truth. We find it represented under a variety of forms and almost endless modes of expression. At one time it is the Lord "destroying the face of the covering cast over all people; and the vail that is spread over all nations†." At another it is He Himself crying, "Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by His name‡." Again, it is an appeal to her that was barren to "break forth into singing and cry aloud;" because "more are the children of the desolate than

\* Isaiah XLix. 6.

† Ibid. xxv. 7.

‡ Ibid. Lxv. 1.



the children of the married wife\*.” Or it is “the wilderness and the solitary place made glad, and the desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose†.” The sum of all being, without a metaphor, that “all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him‡.”

Such is the testimony of prophecy respecting the duration and extent of the kingdom of the Messiah. The question then recurs, How has the Gospel of Jesus met the purport of these sublime predictions? That it exists, and widely, at the present hour, is a sufficient vindication of one part of the prophetic testimony. But we confess that the safer mode of trying its stability, is not merely by counting the years during which it has already existed; although every hour that it survives, it continues to realise the voice of prophecy on this head. But we perceive surer tokens of its character in those *evidences of permanence*, which are derivable from the circumstances under which it has existed. Glance over its history during the first ages of

\* Isai. liv. 1.

† Ib. xxxv. 1.

‡ Psalm xxii. 27.

its perilous and persecuted state; when “the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed\*,” when the name of Christian was nothing less than a death-warrant; and when the worship of Jesus was driven into the depths of caverns, and the darkness of the night. Or again, consider the far more formidable perils with which it had to struggle, after having ascended the throne of temporal dominion, and when “kings were become its nursing fathers, and their queens its nursing mothers;” the distractions which arose within the bosom of its “own household of faith;” the errors and heresies which threatened on all sides to overwhelm that faith with ruin; the bitter animosities which every where sprang up in consequence of these dissensions, so that many times the natural fate of a kingdom divided against itself seemed, to all human calculation, inevitable. Consider it moreover in its *later* fortunes, when the tide of barbarism rushed downward from the vast regions of the North, burying beneath its mighty flood all else that was excellent and precious in the

\* Psalm ii. 2.

world; banishing learning and arts, civilization and refinement, from every seat which they had lately occupied; so that the only treasure which escaped, and which eventually became the restorer of all the rest, was this inextinguishable principle of faith in a crucified Redeemer, with its concomitant blessings of peace and love on earth, and its treasure of holy hopes above.

Nor ought we to overlook another most striking evidence, which it exhibited, at least in the earliest stages of its being, of its power “to withstand in the evil day.” For in proportion to the fury and violence of the storms which swept over it, is the acknowledged feebleness of those *outward* means and instruments by which its existence was supported and preserved. Never was a more apparently unequal combat presented to the admiration of mankind. All the opposite elements of strength and weakness were arrayed against each other. Rank and wealth against poverty and obscurity of station; the strong arm of public law against the defenceless condition of individual weakness; learning was opposed by ignorance; swords and edicts by prayers and preaching; prisons and massacres by

patience and by tears. In the triumph which was gained by the weaker side, the believer gladly owns the might and agency of a stronger arm. He is sure that none but God could thus have "chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are\*." He discerns the sole cause of the victory in those powers of the Divine Spirit, which these feeblest of instruments were permitted to wield; and understands how the strength of an Almighty arm was made perfect in combination with their weakness. While the infidel, on the contrary, would find sufficient reasons for this success in the operation of ordinary human causes, he bears his testimony to the point which we are endeavouring to illustrate. He *owns*, while he would account for, that extraordinary power, which the Gospel has evinced, of withstanding the most destructive assaults upon its existence, and which goes far to vindicate its character for all

\* 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

time to come, as a kingdom that shall not be destroyed.

Nor are the fluctuations, which it has experienced in its progress hitherto, any obstacle to the force of these conclusions. It is no argument against its stability, that of all the countries which were favoured with its early light, scarce a spot can be found where it survives. Many are sunk again in pristine darkness; more are overspread with the abominations of a deadly imposture; the candlestick has been removed from place to place, leaving some in dimness only, and some in night. But yet, if its light has been extinguished in one quarter, it has been kindled afresh in others; and to this day there have never been wanting spots where it has shone with something like its pure and primitive lustre. And even if its sacred sphere should yet be narrowed, more than the world has ever seen, still, while one such spot remains, its prophetic character of permanence can never be defeated. For that single spot may be the centre from which its light shall overspread the world again, and vindicate to the faith of the Prophet of Nazareth, its claim to an imperishable duration.



Let us next consider the *extent* in which that faith has hitherto prevailed among the nations of the earth. In this case the comparison between prophecy and fact may seem, at first sight, not so favourable. The unbounded anticipations of the Messiah's universal reign have received hitherto no adequate accomplishment. The Gospel kingdom, extended perhaps at this moment more widely than at any former period, can even now claim for its professed subjects not much beyond a fourth proportion of the human race. But if any should from hence conclude that the testimony of prophecy is here *against* the religion of Jesus, he would "err, not knowing the Scriptures." He would err in making an unjust comparison between the Gospel in an *initial* stage of its progress, and those predictions which describe the Messiah's kingdom in the height of its *final* exaltation. The true comparison should be between these magnificent visions of prophecy, and the *capability* and *tendency* of the Gospel to fulfil them. And in this view we can affirm that the comparison holds in all the extent which it was reasonable to expect. The spread of the Gospel may seem limited, when estimated

by the noble standard of its final consummation; but in connexion with the circumstances, under which it has progressed, and the obstacles which have ever been springing up in its path, the advances which it has made in leavening the great human mass, are little less than miraculous. Nor is there any reason for believing that its extent is less considerable in proportion to the lapse of time. Eighteen centuries, absolutely considered, may seem a lengthened period for the consummation of a single work; but in comparison with the *whole* term of its allotted duration, this may be but an inconsiderable portion. More years than the religion of Jesus has yet beheld, may be wanting to its final development; in the course of which its increase may be such as abundantly to justify the splendid anticipations which the Spirit of prophecy reveals. It cannot be denied that the present aspect of the Gospel tends powerfully to awaken this impression. The means of its diffusion are great at this moment beyond all former precedent. The relations of commerce have already united the whole civilized portion of the globe in bonds of mutual intercourse and good-will. And there

are but few of its barbarian tracts which the spirit of enterprise from thence arising has not at one period or another explored. The zeal for imparting the faith of the Gospel seems more alive than ever, in order to keep pace with these openings for its diffusion. The cost and labour which have been expended in translations of the holy Scriptures seem almost to revive the gifts of the first Pentecost. One hundred and fifty written and spoken languages repeat "the glad tidings of salvation." Individual devotedness, and the combined energies of Christian societies, promise success as far as human means can go. Thus while the springs of human industry, in every quarter of the globe, are at work in multiplying wealth, it may plead somewhat in extenuation of the universal thirst for gain, that the sail which wafts the perishable mammon to and from the uttermost corners of the earth, bears along with it the unfading riches of that word of life which God hath given to mankind in His Son. With these circumstances in view, slight indeed appears the objection, that *all* which was predicted is not yet fulfilled; "that the leaven has not yet leavened the whole of the three mea-

tures of meal; that the mustard-tree, though advancing in strength and stature, cannot yet bear the birds of heaven to rest upon it\*."

But there is, if I mistake not, a further vision of prophecy, respecting the extension of the kingdom of Christ, which may serve to throw some additional light upon the point which we are now considering. At least it is in singular accordance with that limited diffusion of Gospel truth which the world has hitherto beheld. I allude to a great and simultaneous conversion of a large portion of the Gentile world, as the first-fruits of the previous conversion and restoration of the ancient people of God. For else what meaneth the Spirit of prophecy thus unfolding the mysteries of a future age by him who was consecrated the Apostle of the Gentiles? "I say then, Have they," that is, Israel, "stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if *the fall* of them be the riches of the world, and *the diminishing* of them the

\* This is cited from "Christianity always Progressive," by Hugh J. Rose. p. 69.

riches of the Gentiles; how much more their *fulness*?...For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead\*?" Two great religious dispensations are thus brought under view; the one past, the other yet to come. The former was made the instrument of the most extensive diffusion of spiritual light which the world had hitherto experienced. From the latter the inspired Apostle predicts an analogous, but far more illustrious result. The meaning of his prediction appears perfectly clear and free from ambiguity. He speaks of the fall, or diminishing of the chosen seed, and of "the riches of the Gentiles," which that fall and diminishing proved to be. And when he adverts to their fulness, that is, "the receiving of them" again, and intimates how this shall be, in like manner, the riches of the world, but in a thousandfold more eminent degree, the analogy both of thought and expression sufficiently explains the nature of that spiritual blessing which he has in view. He predicts, in fact, such an incoming of the Gentile world to the faith and profession of the

\* Rom. xi. 11, 12, 15.



Gospel, as shall amply refute every cavil which may be raised upon the ground of its contracted sway. The reason of the case plainly and strikingly seconds the probability of such an event. The universal, or all but universal conversion of God's people, will be a phenomenon for the whole world to gaze upon. The knowledge of their restoration must needs be co-extensive with the wideness of their dispersion. Every country must discern the wondrous truth, and be smitten with astonishment at the sight of this predicted work of God. And what more fitted to effect such a result as that which the Apostle plainly contemplates? What engine more perfect can be imagined for the swift and sudden conversion of a world? I repeat, that the reason of the case does most powerfully second the view which this prediction unfolds, and lends the utmost credibility to such a dispensation of religious events as is there disclosed.

Now it is obvious, that this *prospective* increase of the kingdom of Christ *harmonizes* fully with that state of the Gospel which at present we behold. It would be inconsistent with such an advanced stage of the progress of Christian-

ity as should leave only an inconsiderable portion of the world unconverted. Even upon this view therefore of its present limited extent, the religion of Jesus, so far from falling short of the predictions of the Messiah's universal reign, *may* be preparing the way for a more signal and convincing manifestation of the truth of prophecy. And thus in the inscrutable counsels of God, the very fact, which affords the infidel a theme of triumph, and may at times perhaps have even cast a shade of anxiety over the mind of the believer, shall eventually be made subservient to the great ends of conviction, and demonstrate with tenfold certainty the everlasting truth, that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Upon reviewing that chain of evidence through which we have been led in the investigation of this important subject; we can scarcely fail to be seriously impressed both with the strength and variety of that witness which God hath given us of His Son. If the predictions of the Messiah were not verified in Jesus, it seems impossible for mankind to judge when, or under what circumstances, they ever can be verified.

If He be not “the Prophet that should come into the world,” the coincidence of prophecy and history in His case is inexplicable. If we would assign it to chance, it is a chance about as probable as that to which Atheism would ascribe the order and design of creation. They whose minds can repose in such a conclusion as this, are beyond the reach of testimony. They may justly rank with those who “would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” But for one such, it may be trusted that Faith will count her thousands of sincere and stedfast votaries, upon whose heart the study of “the testimony of Jesus” has wrought conviction unto life eternal. Beholding that amazing series of prophetic signs, which have been fulfilled both *in* Him, and *through* Him, they will trace in them that all-disposing hand which guides alike the works of nature and of grace: while upon this will be grafted the great practical determination, without which conviction will serve only to condemn, that “this God is *our* God for ever and ever; He shall be *our* guide unto death.”

For this, as has been often observed, is the peculiar strength of “the testimony of Jesus,”

that it is receiving continual accessions of fresh evidence. Every hour which advances the great drama of Prophecy, every change which opens the scene, and lets in more light upon the method of its final development, is a new demonstration of the finger of God, and of the truth of His written Word. If then, as that Word does unequivocally declare, "the ruler of the darkness of this world," the dark spirit of infidelity, shall in days to come succeed in gathering around him a mighty and a powerful host, the very same lapse of years which shall be permitted to him for that end, will also be preparing a weapon of corresponding strength to overwhelm him with defeat and ruin. The Spirit of prophecy will then step forth in her accumulated might to confront every adversary of the truth; and believe they must, and behold they shall, albeit but to "wonder and perish." It is thus that prophecy stands, like a beacon light, to guard mankind in every age against the peril of unbelief. For these reasons, and in conformity with the duty of my office, this portion of it has been brought before you. For the most part indeed, the minister *presumes* upon the

faith of his hearers. He discourses from the Scriptures, as “the oracles of God,” and relies upon their being so received. Whether his theme be the “terrors of the Lord” as displayed in the fate of him who “in hell lift up his eyes, being in torments;” or whether he bids you gaze upon the lovelier picture of divine compassion in the wanderings and welcome of the returning prodigal; he does this in the confidence that your faith receives these lessons as “the true sayings of God.” But if to any, they sound only as “cunningly devised fables;” if beautiful and fearful as they are, they are viewed only as the creations of man, and not as “the oracles of God,” oh! then his preaching is indeed in vain; “the word preached hath profited nothing, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

Let us remember therefore at parting that all does not depend upon the *messengers* of the Word of life. Let us be diligent to do our part in securing the profit of that Word, by maintaining a stedfast faith in its authority. Let us “search the Scriptures,” and we shall find in every page abundant evidence of their



divine original. Let us study them, and we shall be provided with an answer to every sceptic who asks a reason of the faith that is in us. And above all, we shall experience in our own breasts, the "joy and peace" that is "in believing;" that freedom from suspense, and that relief which it affords from distracting doubts and anxieties about the future. For this is the believer's privilege, a privilege unknown and unattainable to the sceptic, to be able to say, "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid\*? Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou, my God, art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me†."

\* Ps. xxvii. 1.

† Ps. xxiii. 4.

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A P P E N D I X.

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# A P P E N D I X.

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## LECTURE I.

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PAGE 2, line 22. *Of all these, therefore, the angel must be understood, &c.*

It may not be pretended, that no more was meant by the text, (Rev. xix. 10.) than that the particular prophecy, here delivered, was in attestation of Jesus; for then it would have been expressed with that limitation. The terms, on the other hand, are absolute and indefinite—the *spirit of prophecy*—whence we cannot but conclude that prophecy in general is the subject of the proposition. Hurd, *Introd. to Prophecy*. Sermon. ii. p. 31.

Page 6, line 23. *But they could not have directed us, &c.*

One of the characters which our Saviour constantly assumes and claims in the Gospel, is this; that He is the person spoken of by Moses and the prophets. Whether He is this person or no, must be tried by the words of prophecy; and this makes the argument from prophecy so far necessary to establish the claim of the Gospel; and it has been very justly, as well as acutely, observed, that the proof of this point must rely entirely on the evidence of prophecy. Miracles in this case can afford no help; if the

prophets have not spoken of Christ, all the miracles in the world will not prove that they have spoken of him. These considerations shew how far the Gospel is necessarily concerned in prophetic evidence. Sherlock on the Use and Intent of Prophecy. Disc. ii. p. 31. Oxford. 8vo. 1812.

Page 7, line 22. *For Reason and Experience unite in attesting, &c.*

“In fact, such learned Jews as have in modern times embraced Christianity, (and, compared with those among them who have made any progress in letters, the number is not small,) have usually been convinced by this argument; and several of them have written treatises to prove from the prophecies that Jesus is the Messiah.” Powell’s Discourses. Edited 1776. Disc. ix. p. 147. A reference is given to Chapman’s Eusebius, vol. 1. at the end, where the reader may see a list of instances of Jews, eminent for their learning and abilities, who have been converted to the Christian faith in the manner here stated.

Page 8, line 17. *A prophecy fulfilled has the evidence of a miracle, &c.*

“All prophecies are real miracles, and as such only, can be admitted as proofs of any revelation. If it did not exceed the capacity of human nature to foretel future events, it would be absurd to employ any prophecy as an argument for a divine mission or authority from heaven.” Hume’s Essays, vol. ii. sec. x. On miracles; near the end.

Page 9, line 22. *It is susceptible of being made, &c.*

Prophecy, observes Bp. Van Mildert, possesses this peculiar advantage above all others, that it is a *growing*



evidence, gathering strength by length of time, and affording from age to age fresh proofs of its divine origin. As a majestic river expands itself more and more, the farther it removes from its source, so Prophecy, issuing from the first promise in Paradise, as its fountain head, acquired additional strength and fulness, as it rolled down through successive ages, was enlarged in its course by a number of tributary streams, and will still go on increasing in extent and grandeur, until it shall finally lose itself in the ocean of Eternity. Boyle Lectures. Sermon. xxii. at the end.

Page 11, line 23. *The powers of Antichrist, &c.*

Sir I. Newton has observed upon the subject of Antichrist, that "it is a part of this prophecy, that it should not be understood before the last age of the world; and therefore it makes for the credit of the prophecy, that it is not yet understood." Sir I. Newton, p. 251.

"The fall of Antichrist, observes Bp. Hurd, is not a *single event*, to happen all at once; but a *state of things*, to continue through a long tract of time, and to be gradually accomplished." Introd. to Proph. Sermon. viii.

- Page 15, line 13. *The number, the variety, &c.*

The following most important remark of Bp. Butler upon the force of the whole body of Christian evidences taken together, is so strikingly applicable to that of prophecy in particular, that I hope to be excused for quoting it in this place. "Unless *the whole series* of things which may be alleged in this argument, and *every particular thing* in it, can reasonably be supposed to have been by accident, (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity

lies;) then is the truth of it proved. In like manner as if in any common case, numerous events acknowledged were to be alleged in proof of any other event disputed, the truth of the disputed event would be proved, not only if any one of the acknowledged ones did of itself clearly imply it; but, though no one of them singly did so, if the whole of the acknowledged events taken together, could not in reason be supposed to have happened, unless the disputed one were true." Anal. Part II. Chap. vii. near the end.

Page 23, line 1. *It seems abundantly clear, &c.*

Jortin observes that "there are prophecies of double senses, which admit *no more* than two senses, which are nearly of the same kind with typical prophecies, and many of which might perhaps be cleared up by observing that the prophet meant one thing, and the Spirit of God, who spake by him, meant another thing." And he adduces as an instance of "somewhat of this kind," the prophecy of Caiaphas, *that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not*; remarking that Caiaphas "propheied then and knew it not; for he had himself another intent and meaning." Remarks on Eccles. Hist. Edit. 1751. pp. 188, 189.

While the *civil* affairs of the Jewish people furnished the occasion and substance of their prophecies, the divine wisdom that inspired the prophets, so contrived, as that their *religious* concerns should also be expressed or implied in them. The general theme of the *prophet* was some temporal success or calamity of the Jewish state; the secret purpose of the *inspirer* was, occasionally at least, and when He saw fit, to predict the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah. Hurd on Proph. Sermon v. p. 127.

Page 24, line 1. *Here must be ambiguity indeed, &c.*

Warburton thus points out “the essential difference (so much to the honour of Revelation) between the Pagan oracles or prophecies, and the Jewish. The obscurity of the Pagan arose from *the ambiguity, equivocation or jargon of expression*: the obscurity of the Jewish from *the figurative representation of things*. The first, independent of any other religion, proceeded from ignorance of futurity; the latter, dependent on the Christian, proceeded from the necessity that those to whom the prophecies were delivered, should not have too full a knowledge of them.” Div. Legat. Book VI. Sect. vi. 8vo. Edit. 1758. p. 461. The whole of this Section, which is in a large measure employed in confuting the cavils which have been raised upon this subject, is deserving of a very careful perusal.

Page 24, line 19. *The first fulfilment is a pledge, &c.*

“Since no prophecy of Scripture is of any *private interpretation*, that is, the meaning of prophecies is not what perhaps the prophet himself might imagine in his private judgment of the state of things then present, but *holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; there may therefore very possibly, and very reasonably, be supposed to be many prophecies, which, though they may have a prior and immediate reference to some nearer event, yet by the Spirit of God, (whom those prophecies which are express, shew to have had a further view) may have been directed to be uttered in such words, as may even more properly and more justly be applied to the great event which Providence had in view, than to the intermediate event which God designed only as a pledge or earnest of the other.” Clarke’s Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 409.

Bp. Hurd sums up this argument in these striking terms; “the *civil* prophecies are at once the vehicle, and the credentials, of the *spiritual*, concerning the *first* coming of Jesus; and these last, in their turn, support the credit of others, which point still further at His *second* coming; a subject, more than intimated by the *legal* prophets, but resumed and amply displayed by the *evangelical*. Whence we see, that the prophetic system is so constructed, as, in the progress and various evolutions of it, to illustrate itself, and to afford an internal evidence of its divinity.” Introd. to Proph. Sermon. v. p. 134.

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## LECTURE II.

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Page 31, line 9. *Nor, finally, must we refuse, &c.*

Bp. Van Mildert observes that “the Jews, from the peculiar character of the Mosaic Ritual, were habituated to mystical researches, and deemed them necessary to a right exposition of the Law and the Prophets. And although it be true, that this species of interpretation was, on their part, often carried to a culpable excess, and in after times degenerated into absurdities worse than frivolous and contemptible; yet it can hardly be denied, that much of the elucidation of the prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the Messiah, and of their accomplishment in the New, depends upon the judicious application of this kind of evidence.” Bampton Lect. Sermon. vii. p. 229.

And again, after having shewn “that all the prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the kingdom of Christ,

were of necessity to be understood, not in a *literal*, but in a *spiritual* sense ;” he says, “there is also evidence to prove, that they were explained according to this latter sense, by the most ancient and approved Interpreters in the Jewish Church.” Boyle Lect. Sermon. iii. p. 95.

Page 32, line 17. *One of that infidel band, &c.*

Collins, in his “Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion,” and “the Scheme of Literal Prophecy considered.”

Page 34, line 9. *Before the objector demurred, &c.*

The whole of chap. vi. of Bp. Chandler’s Defence of Christianity against Collin’s Tract of “the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion,” is devoted to shewing that “the sense given by Christ and His Apostles, to the prophecies of the Old Testament, is certainly to be preferred to any other possible sense of the prophecies.”

Page 39, line 9. *We may conclude therefore, &c.*

Calvin has vindicated the true interpretation of this prophecy upon another ground :—“*Ecquid enim mirum dixisset Propheta, si de puellâ loquutus esset, quæ ex congressu viri conciperet? Certè ridiculum fuisset id signi aut miraculi loco proponere.*”—“*Satis igitur constat ipsum loqui de virgine, quæ non erat ordinario naturæ ordine, sed ex gratiâ Spiritûs sancti conceptura.*” Comment. ad loc.



Page 40, line 9. *A decree, which had been issued years before, &c.*

The reader will find the authorities for this remarkable fact adduced by Hammond in his Annotations on Luke. Chap. ii. v. 1.

Page 43, line 18. *Even the land of Zebulun, &c.*

Upon the true connection and interpretation of this passage of Isaiah, see Lowth's Commentary and Bishop Lowth's New Translation.

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### LECTURE III.

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Page 60, line 10. *This truth is embodied, &c.*

The original word is the one commonly used in the law of Moses to signify the punishment of death, *judicially* inflicted. "It indicates generally the punishment of death, without pointing out the *manner* of it." Vid. Gesen. Heb. Lex. Translated by Leo. voc. בְּרִית.

Page 61, line 8. *Yet from the armoury, &c.*

Kidder has observed that the capital punishments among the Jews were these four; stoning, burning, strangling, and killing with the sword. See Demonst. of the Messiah. Part i. p. 73. Edit. fol. 1726.

## LECTURE IV.

Page 89, line 25. "*Sit thou on my right hand, &c.*"

That Messiah should after His sufferings be thus exalted was determined in the divine counsel and covenant, before the world began. Whether we suppose the Psalmist to be speaking of that determination, or of its actual accomplishment at the time of Christ's ascension into heaven, it maketh no great difference. The substance of the decree is the same. It was addressed by the Father to the Son; by Jehovah to Messiah, whom David in spirit styleth "My Lord"; one that should come after him, as his offspring according to the flesh; but one, in dignity of person, and greatness of power, far superior to him, and to every earthly potentate; "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords;" God and man united in one person. To this person it was said by the Father, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." In other words, Seeing, O my Son, Messiah, thou hast glorified me on the earth, and finished the work which I gave thee to do, the great work of man's redemption; take now the throne prepared for thee from the foundation of the world; behold, all power is given unto thee; enter upon thy mediatorial kingdom; and reign till every opposer shall have submitted himself to thee, and Sin and Death shall have felt thy all-conquering arm. Bp. Horne on Ps. cx. 1.

Page 94, line 5. "*This was the hope of the afflicted patriarch, &c.*"

The following paraphrase of this text of Job is given by Dr Tottie "from the authority," as he observes, "of very able

and judicious critics." "I know for certainty that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall at last, or in the last day, arise with power over the dust, that dust out of which man was made. Then shall this dilacerated body put on a new clothing. *וְאַחֵר עוֹרִי נִקְפִּיזוֹת*, Alia erit cutis mea hæc laceratio." So the words are read and translated by Michælis. "And from my own body shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself; with mine own eyes shall I behold him; nor shall I then be a man different from myself." Vid. Tottie's Sermon on Matth. xxii. 31, 32.

Page 94, line 19. "*God will redeem my soul, &c.*"

The prophet here expresseth a full and firm faith in the resurrection, and may be conceived as speaking in the person of Him, who was first redeemed from the grave, and accepted by the Father. Horne on Ps. xlix. 15.

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## LECTURE V.

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Page 103, line 14. *Doctrine of a Redeemer to come pervades the writings of Moses.*

This subject has been treated in a very able and interesting manner by the Rev. J. J. Blunt in his second course of Hulsean Lectures, entitled 'Principles for the proper understanding of the Mosaic writings stated and applied.'

Page 104, line 23. *And more especially, &c.*  
Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist. vol 1.

Page 105, line 10. *By a Jewish Commentator, &c.*

Abarbanel. Preface to Comment. on Jeremiah.

Page 114, line 5. *The rest were no more than interpreters, &c.*

See Calvin's Pref. to his Comment. on Isaiah, in which this view of the relative Character of the Law and the Prophets is illustrated with great force and clearness.

## LECTURE VI.

Page 128, line 3. *It was not political merely, &c.*

For the benefits, which Christianity has conferred upon mankind in this view, the reader will find a comprehensive account in Jortin's 'Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion,' p. 134, &c. 2 Edit. 8vo. 1747. Also in Euseb. Præp. Evang. i. 4. to which Jortin refers.

Page 137, line 4. *How writers of that, &c.*

A great variety of very striking testimonies to the truth of prophecy may be seen in Dr Keith's recent publication on this subject.

Page 138, line 16. *False Christs innumerable, &c.*

For an enumeration of the various impostors, who assumed the name of Christ both about the time of our

Saviour and at subsequent periods, see Kidder's *Demonst. of the Messias*, Part I. Chap. ii. and Part III. Chap. 10.

Page 141, line 3. *Can it be true, &c.*

Rousseau has thus expressed this delusive plea for infidelity. "Est-on maitre de croire on de ne pas croire?"

Page 142, line 15. *Before faith can take root, &c.*

"But faith, if I mistake not, hath, besides, another merit more properly its own, not acquired from its consequences, but conveyed to it from the *principles* in which it takes its rise. These indeed are what gives to every action, much more than its consequences, its proper character and denomination; and the principles in which faith is founded appear to be that integrity, that candour, that sincerity of mind, that love of goodness, that reverent sense of God's perfections, which are, in themselves, the highest of moral endowments, and the sources of all other virtues, if indeed there be any virtue, which is not contained in these." See Horsley's 2nd Sermon on John xx. 29. near the end.

In the same place he characterizes unbelief, as arising "from a dishonest resistance of conviction; from a distaste for moral truth; from an alienation of the mind from God and goodness." Of this he says, "It must be *nigh unto cursing*, inasmuch as in the very essence and formality of its nature, it is an accursed thing."



## LECTURE VII.

Page 156, line 10. *None are ignorant of their real sway, &c.*

The following passages are extracted from a memoir of the celebrated N. M. Rothschild, published soon after his decease in a work, called "the Agriculturist," and copied into the Metropolitan Magazine for October 1836.

"The changes in the dynasties of the princely houses of Germany, which may be traced to the influence of the French revolution of 1792, soon reduced the inferior princes of Germany literally to a state of painful obligation to the leading members of the Hebrew persuasion, who so long had been treated with scorn and contumely in the cities of the European continent.—The progress of civil and foreign warfare on the continent gave *an amazing power* to the despised race; who, however, on several occasions, by their actions evinced to their oppressors a great degree of the milk of human kindness; and in many instances, by their probity, obtained the confidence of the chief houses of Germany."

Concerning the five brothers (Rothschild) the "Journal du Commerce" has the following;

"The five brothers have taken part in most of the great financial affairs of France, of England, and almost every country. They have formed among themselves an invincible phalanx. By themselves, or by their agents, they have exercised a great control over the principal places in Europe; and, faithful to their habit, never to undertake any thing separately, and to concert all their operations, they have

followed one unvaried and identical system. Their power was such, that at one time, *they were free to make* either peace or war."

Page 157, line 7. *It was now nearly half a century, &c.*

That the downfall of the Turkish empire forms a part of the visions of prophecy unfulfilled is the opinion of many of the most eminent writers upon this subject; thus Mede and Vitranga, with many more, interpret the pouring out of the sixth vial. Revel. xvi. 12.

In a discourse delivered in 1791 by Priestly, there is the following observation. "One great event, which I begin to flatter myself we may be looking forward to, is the fall of the Turkish empire; when an end will be put to a system of government, the most unfriendly to human happiness, and to improvements of all kinds, that the world has ever groaned under."

Another writer, adopting the general opinion, that "the great river Euphrates" in the above-cited text from Revel. is to be understood of the Turkish empire, observes; "We do, at this very time, see this great emblematical river drying up. We see this empire fading away, and growing exceeding weak. It has already been in great danger from Russia, and has yielded up much." King's Morsels of Criticism, p. 447.

Page 158, line 22. *Such a tissue of profaneness, &c.*

For an account of these matters, see Allen's 'Modern Judaism,' Chap. vii. to Chap. xi. more particularly.

Page 159, line 14. *Based upon applications of Scripture, &c.*

As a specimen, take the following from Maimon. de

Pœnit. by Clavering, quoted in Allen, p. 126. "When a man's virtues and vices are compared, the first and second sins are not reckoned, but only the third, and those which follow. If, on computing from the third, his vices be found to exceed his virtues, then the first two sins are added to the number, and judgment is passed upon him for the whole. But if, on numbering from the third, his virtues and vices be equal, then no account is taken of the first two, because the third is considered as the first; for two are now pardoned; and the fourth *becomes* the first because the third is forgiven; and so onwards even to the end. How is it to be understood? Only of *an individual*, as it is said; "Lo, all these things will God do with a man twice and thrice." Job xxxiii. 29. For to the *congregation*, neither the first, second, nor third sin is imputed; according as it is said; "for three transgressions of *Israel*, yea, even for four, I will not turn away." Amos ii. 6. And when an account is thus taken of their sins, the computation commences with the fourth, which is reckoned as the first.

Page 161, line 15. *The fulness of the Gentiles, &c.*

Faber has argued very forcibly that this 'fulness' refers to *time*, in opposition to the common opinion which would interpret it of the *numbers* of the Gentiles who shall be brought within the pale of the Christian church; in other words, of a great and general conversion of the Gentile world to the faith of Christianity. Sac. Cal. of Proph. Book ii. Chap. 2. The whole of this chapter, which is devoted to an exposition of this famous prophecy of St Paul, deserves a careful perusal.

## LECTURE VIII.

Page 176, line 10. *Not much beyond a fourth proportion, &c.*

For some interesting information upon the *religious* distribution of the whole population of the earth, see Note 1 to Chap. iv. in the Christian Advocate's publication (the Rev. Hugh James Rose) for the year 1829, entitled 'Christianity always Progressive.'

Page 176, line 19. *The true comparison should be, &c.*

"I am far from imagining that Christianity is yet come to its *mature* state; that it is understood in the whole extent, or held in its utmost purity and perfection by any one church. But, as when it was first preached, men were fit to hear, and profit by it, in a competent degree, as that was a proper time to divulge it, in order to improve the world, which it did very considerably, excelling all former dispensations, refining the conceptions, even of those who did not formally receive it, and yet was itself, for some time, but partially communicated and imperfectly understood; so now it is of much greater advantage to the world in general, and yet still capable of increase; it waits for its own *fulness*; nor shall mankind receive the proper influence of it, till their minds be much farther opened and enlarged, their reason more freely exercised, in this great mystery of Divine love." Law's Theory of Religion, p. 208, 9.

Page 179, line 11. *A great and simultaneous conversion, &c.*

With this prophecy of St Paul, compare Zech. xiv. 8., Ezek. xlvii. 1—12, and Joel iii. 18. “Under the image of a river flowing out from the temple of Jerusalem, the waters of which gradually rise, until they become a mighty stream which cannot be passed over, and which itself communicates health and life, whithersoever it cometh, is clearly and aptly shadowed out the beneficent progress of the Gospel from the metropolis *of the converted and restored* Israelites, through every province and kingdom of the Gentile world.” Faber, Sac. Cal. Book ii. Ch. 2. with his references to Newcome on Ezek. xlvii. 5, and Micah v. 7.

“Such being the remarkable office of the house of Israel in all ages (viz. to spread the knowledge of the true God among mankind;) we shall not wonder to find the chosen race styled by the prophet Hosea, ch. i. 11. and ii. 22. the *Jezrael* or *the seed of God*. Why is this singular title, the title of *the seed of God*, bestowed upon the Lord’s ancient people? Great and happy shall be the day, says Bp. Horsley, when the holy seed of both branches of the natural Israel shall be publicly acknowledged of their God; united under one Head, their king Messiah; and restored to the possession of the promised land, and to a situation of high pre-eminence among the kingdoms of the earth. The myriads of the natural Israel, converted by the preaching of the Apostles, were the first seed of the universal Church; and there is reason to believe, that the restoration of the converted Jews will be the occasion and means of a prodigious influx of new converts from the Gentiles in the latter ages. Thus the Jezrael of the natural Israel from the first have been, and to the last will prove, a seed sown of God for himself in the earth.” Faber, *ibid*.













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